JONATHAN DAVIS
INSIDE HIS **MOST PERSONAL** SONGS

BEHEMOTH
NERGAL: THE K! INTERVIEW

ASKING ALEXANDRIA
DANNY WORSNOP'S DECADE OF DECADENCE

KERRANG!

THE MAKING OF ROCK'S LAST OUTLAW...

SLASH

THE LOST INTERVIEW

PLUS
GUNS N' ROSES
POSTER SPECIAL

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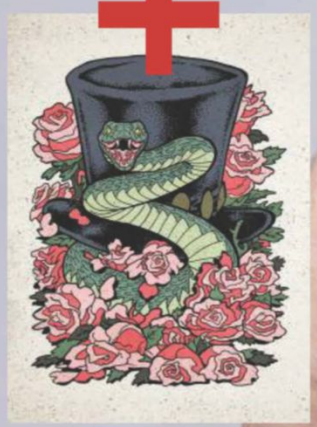

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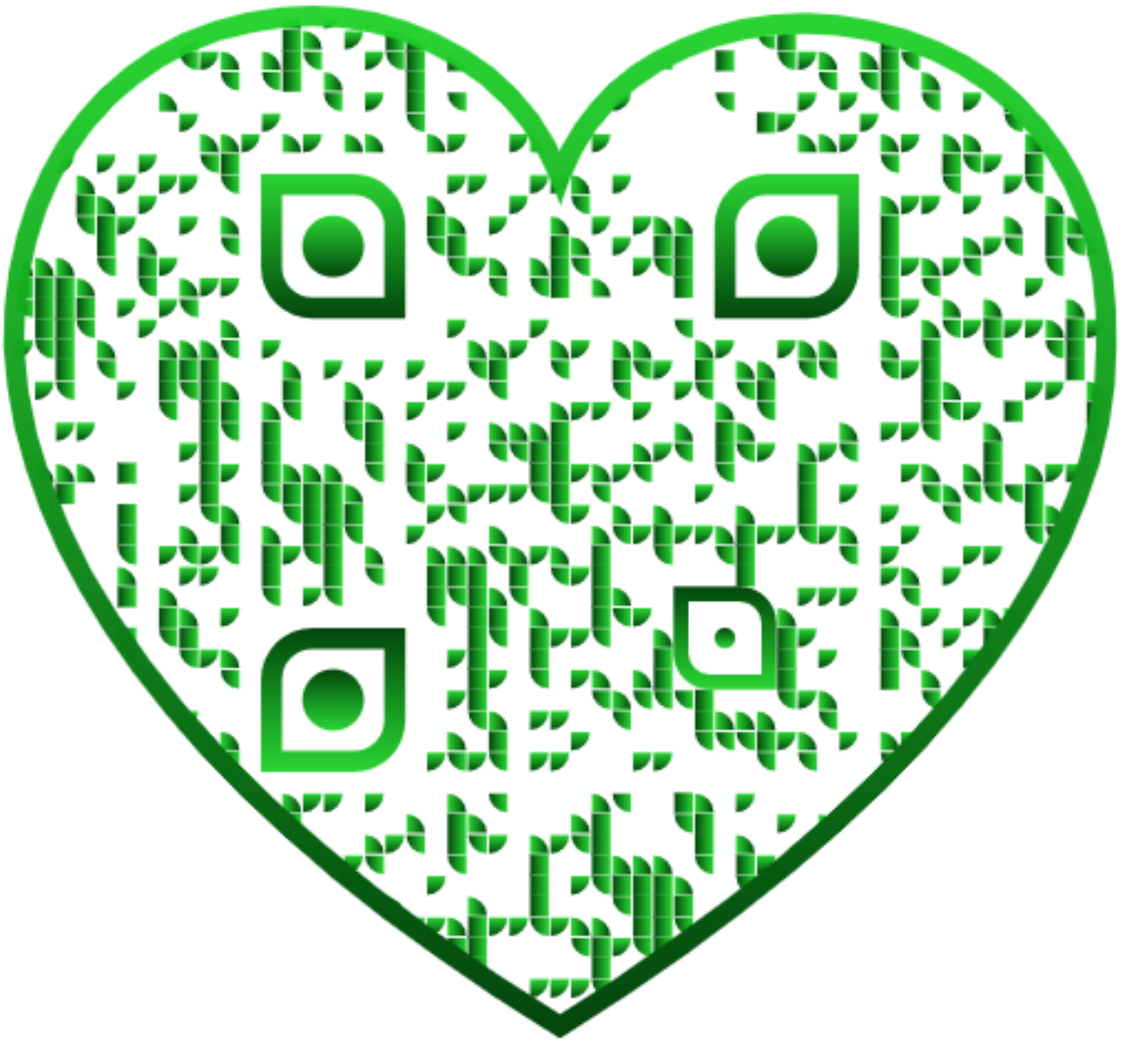

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WELCOME

ISSUE K!1718
APRIL 21, 2018

If you were to say the word 'rockstar' to the man in the street, chances are their mind would conjure up the image of a guitarist with a mass of black curls covering his face, a cigarette hanging from his lip and a top hat perched on his head. In a Lemmy-less world, no-one embodies rock'n'roll more than Slash. The stories, the myths, we all know; the appetite for destruction, the frightening fret-board ability, the no-fucks-given attitude. But behind that carved-in-stone image of a rock god lies a man; a pretty ordinary one, at that, who one day found himself with fame and fortune at his feet. This week's issue unearths a lost 1991 interview by K! scribe Sylvie Simmons that transports us back to that time, when the 26-year-old guitarist was still coming to terms with his newfound place in the world, and gives a fascinating insight into the makings of a legend.

Until next week, enjoy the issue!

SAM COARE, EDITOR

SLASH THE LOST INTERVIEW, UNEARTHED; HIS BEST RIFFS, UNPICKED. IT'S THE INSIDE STORY OF THE MAKING OF A GUITAR GOD

JONATHAN DAVIS KORN'S KING OF MISERY STRIKES OUT ON HIS OWN

NERGAL "WHAT WILL BE WRITTEN ON MY TOMBSTONE? 'LIVED, LOVED, CONQUERED'"

ASKING ALEXANDRIA DANNY WORSNOP TAKES HIS BEST SHOT. OR SIX

MØL IF YOU LISTEN TO JUST ONE RECORD THIS WEEK, MAKE IT JORD – TRUST US

MARMOZETS JUMP ABOARD THE TRAVELLING MARMZ CIRCUS

FACT! ROLO TOMASSI'S RAUMDEUTER, FROM 2015'S GRIEVANCES, IS NAMED AFTER GERMAN FOOTBALLER THOMAS MÜLLER, LABELLED HIS TEAM'S 'RAUMDEUTER', OR 'SPACE INTERPRETER'

WISH YOU WERE HERE

NECK DEEP get in people's faces at wild South American shows

Last week, Neck Deep wrapped up their The Peace And The Panic world tour in electrifying fashion. "Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to everyone who came to a show. To travel to all these corners of the world and to see people singing along with every word is truly humbling. We could never express our gratitude enough for you," the pop-punks posted on Twitter, along with some seriously impressive stats: they played 71 shows in 89 days across 14 countries; they sold some 54,571 tickets; and they travelled a whopping 64,904 miles across the lot. We're terrible at maths, so let's just say here's the band playing to a very small percentage of those attendees in Porto Alegre, Brazil. And what better way to finish up a colossal tour than by stripping things back in a tiny room and getting sweaty? Exactly. **K!**

PHOTO: MURILO AMANCIO

A reflective JDevil photographed last month

THE BIG STORY

THE MAZE RUNNER

For the past 25 years, JONATHAN DAVIS has been leading the nu-metal pack with KORN. Since 2007, though, he's also quietly been concocting a long-awaited solo album. Ahead of its release, he takes us inside the mysterious BLACK LABYRINTH...

Jonathan Davis can't wait to finally share his debut solo album with the world. It's little wonder, given that the Korn frontman first had the idea for Black Labyrinth more than a decade ago, when he embarked upon 2007's Alone I Play Tour, during which he played a mixture of the songs he wrote for 2002 horror film Queen Of The Damned, and less commonly performed tracks from the band he's fronted since 1993.

"The majority of Black Labyrinth, including [first single] What It Is, was done in 2007 and 2008," he explains of a record that explores the 47-year-old's more cerebral, atmospheric creative impulses, and has been the subject of a number of frustrating delays over the years. "After I hooked up with Ash [Avildsen] and Sumerian [Records], I spent late last year and early this year working on some other songs. I did 25 in total, 13 of which made the record."

Jonathan recently hit the road in support of the album, and caught up with K! about its inception, inspirations and his desire to be in a vampire band mere minutes after coming offstage at his first show of the tour, at the Crystal Ballroom in Portland. "I've been waiting and waiting and waiting patiently, and now I've *really* started my journey," he says, tired but excited. "I'm a happy motherfucker right now!" And with the added bonus of two UK headline shows in June, as well as an appearance at Download, rightly so...

Hi, Jonathan! So, what was it about those Alone I Play shows back in 2007 and 2008 that kick-started your desire to make a solo album?

"It was no pressure, and the band of people I put together were amazing musicians. Not that I'm saying that Korn as players are bad, because I love my brothers, but this is a different thing – a different level, I guess."

Why, given your enthusiasm for the project, has it taken more than a decade for the record to reach listeners?

"What happened was I got signed by Warner Brothers, and there were two different labels there and they didn't know which one they were going to put it out on. Then, right in the middle of my project, the president left, and the guy I'd wanted to have produce the record ended up becoming the president, so he couldn't do it. I really respect his opinion, and suddenly he was gone, so I said, 'Please, guys, just let me have my record and I'll go about my business,' and they did. Then it was back to keeping the Korn train running with records and tours, so there was no time for me to do my thing correctly – until now."

> **"THIS IS ABOUT ENLIGHTENMENT, AND TRYING TO FIND THE MEANING OF LIFE..."**
> JONATHAN DAVIS

We understand that you recorded many of the vocals in your closet?

"There's going to be a video documentary coming out that shows what I was doing. I was in this teeny closet with a Pro Tools rig upstairs in this guest house I have where I live in Malibu, and I did most of the record there. It was a crazy process. My son Pirate was only two years old at the time, and I had a newborn, Zeppy [Zeppelin], so I was also running in and helping with the kids. I wrote all over the world when I was on the road: in Russia, Manchester, Germany and all over the U.S., then I came back and started recording in Los Angeles and Malibu. And then 10 years later I finished it up in my studio in Bakersfield, at my studio in Oildale."

That's certainly given the album an international flavour, then...

"It has, definitely, and that's a result of the players, too. [Indian-born violinist] Shenkar is on it, and he's played with everybody

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE PHOTO: JONATHAN WEINER

Jonathan on Korn: "I love my brothers"

from Frank Zappa to Peter Gabriel – the guy is a legend. Plus there's Miles Mosley, who plays bass, and is blowing up in the jazz world – he's an amazing player. And Wes Borland from [Limp] Bizkit plays on five or six songs."

Korn drummer Ray Luzier is on the record, as well as in your live band, too. Was it important for you to have at least one familiar face on board with this project?

"After I did the Alone I Play tour, Ray had just joined Korn. This record was the first thing he did. He knocked the drums out of the park on this record – no-one plays like him. Ray is also the musical director, the leader of the band; he's been enjoying the fuck out of it."

Given the fact you made this record alongside your work with Korn, how did you compartmentalise your writing for your projects?

"I knew this was all mellow stuff that Korn wouldn't do. Actually, I take it back… there was one song that started out as a solo thing and became a Korn song, and that was Take Me [from last 2016's The Serenity Of Suffering]: [That album's producer] Nick Raskulinecz liked it so much he said, 'Come on, man, we've got to do it for the Korn record.' The work I did on Queen Of The Damned remained an inspiration for this: what kind of music would a vampire rock band make? A vampire may have been alive for over 600 years and travelled the world, so would have taken in all kinds of influences."

You've previously said you'll be "pulling listeners in a different direction" with this record. How so?

"I'm telling a story with my videos. I started out with the What It Is video, and then Everyone, with a story that's going in reverse. It's kind of a concept. It all revolves around this thing I did called the ganzfeld experiment, which is something where you have goggles over your eyes and look at a red light while listening to white noise. If you do this for about 10 to 20 minutes then you start to hallucinate crazy shit: some people see shapes, others have crazy visions. That shit inspired me, and so the album is about enlightenment, why I belong in this world, what religion is, and my journey of trying to find the meaning of life. I want it to be like an art experience. I don't want people to take it too seriously, though – it's all entertainment."

Which songs are you most excited for people to hear?

"I love What You Believe. The lady talking at the beginning is actually [sometime Korn producer] Ross Robinson's mother [speaker and author Byron Katie]. Ross told me to go online and listen to one of her speeches, so I looked it up and this is the first thing she said: 'What you believe is your religion, and everything you believe in and love is just that – there's no room for God in it.' That was the most prolific shit I've ever heard in my life, and it knocked my dick in the dirt. I wrote What You Believe there and then. I later called Ross and told him to bring his mum over. She started pumping her fist in the studio when she heard it."

You're on the bill of this year's Download Festival, performing solo on the Zippo Encore Stage – how do you feel about the prospect of playing a festival you've had a long history with under a different guise?

"I'm really excited for it. In 2007 with Alone I Play I did Rock am Ring and Rock im Park [in Germany], and some other festivals, and people really dug it. I'm sure the crowd at Download is going to get it; you're not going to go [and see his set] to mosh and rock the fuck out – this is another kind of serious show." **K!**

JONATHAN DAVIS'S NEW ALBUM BLACK LABYRINTH IS OUT ON MAY 25 VIA SUMERIAN RECORDS. CATCH HIM LIVE IN MANCHESTER AND LONDON IN JUNE, AS WELL AS AT DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL – SEE THE GIG GUIDE

THE GANZFELD WHAT…?!

JONATHAN's first two solo videos touch on one of the album's main themes: the ganzfeld experiment. But what exactly is that?

In newest singles What It Is and Everyone, there's a *lot* of psychological tests and examinations going on, where you can see human beings pushed to their absolute extremes. And the focus is, as Jonathan says, the ganzfeld experiment (ganzfeld being German for 'whole field' – which refers to the method of replacing your whole field of perception). Exposing its participants to unusual sensations, the experiment is used to test individuals for psychic abilities. And while the results of these studies seem to come out as pretty mixed, participants' reports of their hallucinations are fascinating – from fields and running water, to ominous, shadowy figures. We'll probably give that a miss, then.

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TALKING LOUD

THE WORLD WILL ALWAYS NEED ROCK

It changed the life of QUIET SLANG's JAMES ALEX, and, as the frontman says, rock remains as important as it ever has been...

"When I hear rumours about an impending renaissance of guitars, or the genre making a 'real comeback', it makes no sense to me, because it *never went anywhere*. Maybe the media has fed that, and maybe it isn't as fully in the public consciousness as it once was, but everywhere I go I still see those same outsider kids, picking up guitars and saying, 'I *matter*.' In the book Trouble Boys, about the band The Replacements, there's a sentence about a fan walking up to [frontman] Paul Westerberg and telling him, 'It feels like you wrote that song for me,' and he said, 'Yeah, I did. I don't know you, but I knew you were out there.'

"I never will liken myself to people like him and Iggy Pop and those who shaped me, but now I get to do that, and when I see the eyes of fans in the crowd I know that they're taking from it the same thing I did. *That's* what's beautiful about rock'n'roll, and that's why it will *always* matter.

"I get accused of romanticising rock'n'roll, and to that my response is a very polite 'fuck you', but I'm the type of cat that digs the way stale beer smells in a small venue. I dig the blood on my guitar, the jitter that I feel before I walk out onstage, and all of that is born of rock'n'roll. On the sleeve of one of our records I wrote 'Rock'n'roll is a lawless place for forgotten kids', and that was what it was all about to me growing up, and that's what I think it is to a lot of those forgotten kids right now.

"Finding the punk rock scene that I did gave me some place to be, it gave me friends, it gave me community, and while I still went home and went to school and might feel alone I felt alone *together*, because I knew there were these people who felt the same as me out there. There was one underage club in my city where at weekends they'd get the alternative and punk bands in, and for us it was like going to church. *That* was how important it was to us. Even now rock'n'roll is still the most cathartic, necessary thing in the world." **K!**

QUIET SLANG'S NEW ALBUM EVERYTHING MATTERS BUT NO ONE IS LISTENING IS DUE OUT ON MAY 18 VIA BIG SCARY MONSTERS

"ROCK'N'ROLL IS BEAUTIFUL... IT WILL ALWAYS MATTER"
JAMES ALEX

WORDS: DAN SLESSOR PHOTO: IAN LAIDLAW

INSTANT EXPERT

WILDEST DREAMS

DREAM STATE's new EP, RECOVERY, sees a band ready to take on the world. Singer CJ Gilpin explains it all...

WORDS: TOM SHEPHERD

1 ITS OPENING TRACK WENT VIRAL

Chances are you've already heard the heart-stopping White Lies, which opens the EP. The video for the song spread like viral wildfire in 2017, and has already racked up more than five million views on YouTube. "The last year has been absolutely insane – it just hasn't stopped," says singer CJ Gilpin. "It was the power of the fans that just made it go 'boom'."

2 IT'S AN EXTREMELY PERSONAL RECORD

White Lies shone a spotlight on CJ's battle with addiction. And that candid nature continues with Recovery. "After we released White Lies, we had a lot of people write to us [about how] the song was helping them," she says. "And I thought: I want to continue to be as honest as I can. I want people to connect with me and I want to connect with them."

3 THE TRACK ORDER TELLS A STORY

Each of the five tracks represents a stage in the singer's recovery, taking in moments of relapse and rehabilitation. "The whole EP is completely linked," she continues. "Lyrically, I took White Lies and continued the story on from what I've been going through the past couple of years. I wanted to continue talking about this subject that needs to be spoken about more."

4 IT'S A RECORD THAT TARGETS ANXIETY

Issues of mental health swirl throughout the EP, as CJ explores her own relationship with anxiety. "I started reading a lot about anxiety and how I understand it," the singer explains. And she hopes that any fans affected will find solace in the songs. "I want them to take from it that it's okay not to be okay – I hear that line quite a lot lately, but it's very true."

5 THE BAND HAVE JOINED A NEW LABEL

Recovery is the Swansea quintet's first output on independent Australian label UNFD. Alongside stablemates such as Northlane, Hellions and Cursed Earth, the eye-opening, dark-and-then-light intensity of Dream State's vibrant post-hardcore sounds and feels right at home.

6 THERE ARE SOME BIG SHOWS TO FOLLOW

As well as supporting BABYMETAL across Europe in June, the band will also be appearing at Download. "We're super-stoked," says CJ. "We're all hardcore Downloaders. I normally camp every year, but this time I'll be sipping tea, resting my voice and probably sleeping in a bed!"

DREAM STATE'S RECOVERY EP IS SET FOR RELEASE ON MAY 18 VIA UNFD

PANDORA BY RAY ZELL

RAYZELL.COM

ACCESS ALL AREAS

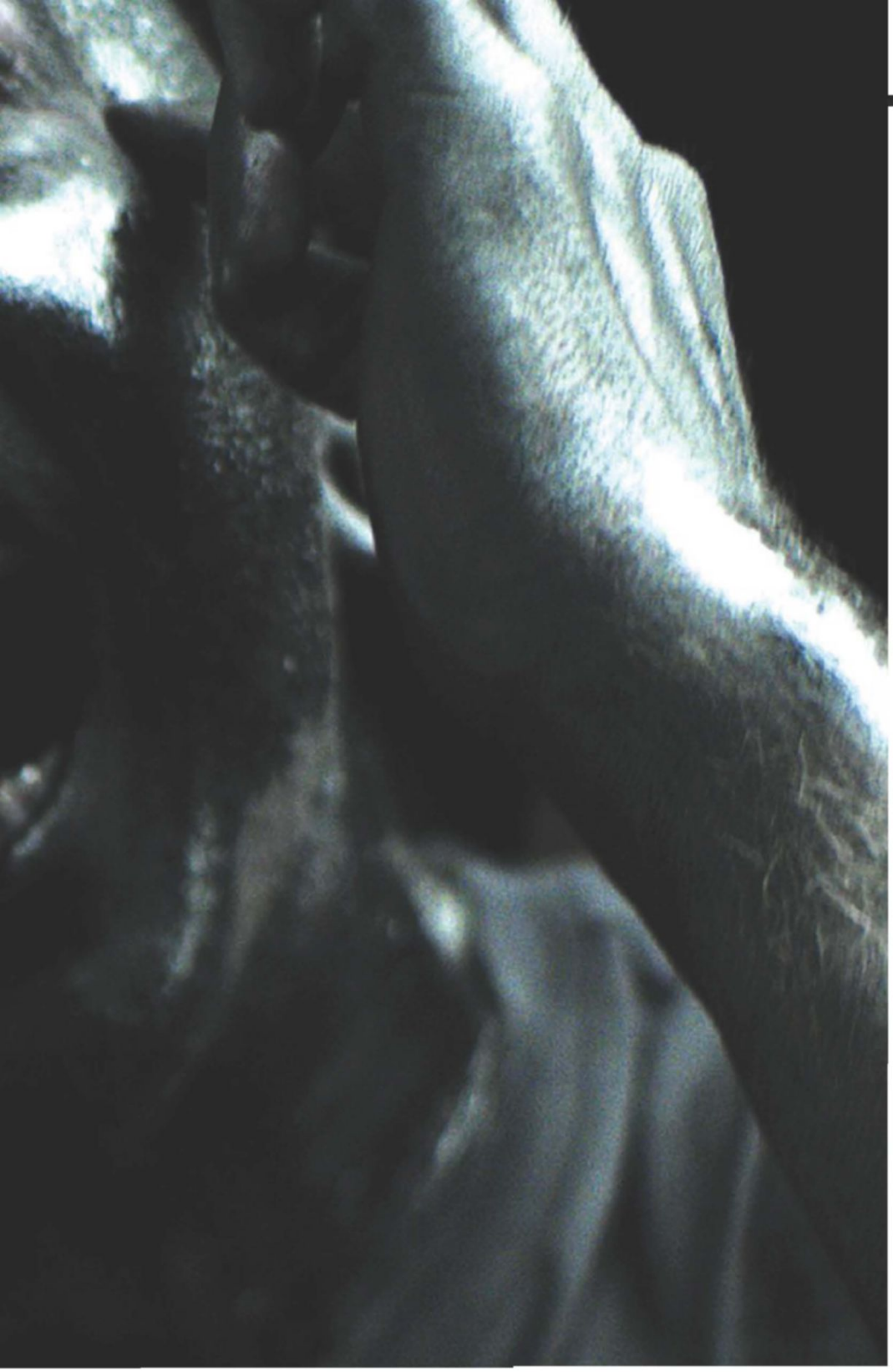
BLACK MAGIC

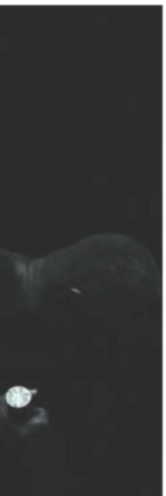
Just over two years on from Earthbound, and BURY TOMORROW are back with news of its follow-up, BLACK FLAME. Oh, and a terrifying lead video…

Never a band to worry about mucking in on a video shoot – just watch the flame-filled Man On Fire, or the soaking-wet downpour of Cemetery – Bury Tomorrow have just released one of their messiest, most intense and downright terrifying efforts to date.

The clip, which accompanies their new album's lead single – and also serves as the full-length's title-track – goes by the name Black Flame, and welcomes in a whole new era for the metalcore five-piece.

Before they unveiled the colossal tune and video on April 13, though, the band launched an interactive map for fans, asking them to 'claim their flame' by entering their postcode into an app. The more people who joined in, the more – you guessed it – the flames spread across the globe. Neat, eh? And this is just the start, with Black Flame (the album) set for release on July 13 via Music For Nations. We'll stock up on fire extinguishers in advance, for when things inevitably get out of hand. ***K!***





Nobody can beat Woes in a game of 'Spot the camera'

AMPED UP

WOES

Meet the Edinburgh quartet breaking the boundaries of pop-punk…

Regeneration is imperative to survival. It's a fact of which Edinburgh outfit Woes are all too aware. "Pop-punk has been around for almost 30 years," explains frontman David 'DJ' Jess. "We're interested in how we can change it."

"I'd get so bored doing the same old things," chimes bassist Sean Duddy. "How can we do something that Neck Deep or The Story So Far haven't done before? Or that blink-182 haven't done the generation before that? For our own sanity, we've got to keep evolving."

> **"WE'RE INTERESTED IN HOW WE CAN CHANGE POP-PUNK"**
> DAVID 'DJ' JESS

With a band name referencing R'n'B superstar Drake and influences ranging from "NOFX to Bon Iver to Frank Ocean", there's nothing generic about Woes' approach. "We take influence from really weird places," laughs DJ. "The more music we release, the more hip-hop influence you'll see. Yes, we're a pop-punk band, but we want to incorporate modern sounds into that.

"Our next song is built around this piano loop," he continues. "We know it as 'Hotline Bling 2'. The lawyers at our label, UNFD, saw that and freaked out!"

The fact that Scotland isn't renowned for its scene, DJ stresses, is a handicap that only spurs the quartet (rounded out by guitarist Stuart Laing and drummer Ryan Neish) on. "There's never been a pop-punk community here. Playing a show in London is a huge thing. It's like, 'Okay, we'll drive nine hours down, nine hours back, and we'll get £100 for it…' But we do it.

"When we were offered a support slot with Neck Deep, I had to google the capacity of Brixton Academy," grins Sean. "That was a turning point for us. We knew we had to take this more seriously."

With eyes pointed upward, focus remains fixed on Woes' future, and making sure they get everything right. "Slam Dunk and Download this year will be awesome," says DJ, "but I'm mostly focused on delivering a debut album that's the best it can be – something so packed it'll take a few listens to get through."

"We wrote a lyric once – '*Good vibes change lives,*'" Sean concludes, unwrapping the philosophy at Woes' beating heart. "That's still the outlook we want to live by." K!

WOES' EP SELF HELP IS OUT ON MAY 4 VIA UNFD. THE BAND TOUR IN MAY – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR DETAILS

GET TO KNOW

Your quick guide to WOES

THEY ARE: Edinburgh pop-punks ready to take the genre to fresh new places.
HEAR: Emo-tastic single Real World.
SEE: The video for High On You, featuring footage from their tours with Neck Deep and As It Is.
MORE INFO: Facebook.com/woesuk

WORDS: SAM LAW

NOW HEAR THIS

JUSTINE JONES brings heaviness to our weekly, guest-hosted new music round-up!

What's up! I'm back again to tell you all about my latest music obsessions.

First up, we have **Gouge Away**. This band are quickly becoming one of my favourites, especially since they have the same name as one of my favourite Pixies songs. Straight out of Florida, they have a desolate and abrasive hardcore sound that's not too dissimilar to the likes of Trash Talk, but also with hints of bands like Single Mothers and Drug Church. They have just announced that they're about to record a new album, which will be released through Jacob Bannon from Converge's label, Deathwish Inc., later in the year. It's always a great sign when a band you like signs to one of your favourite labels! With each song averaging one minute in length, it would be rude not to give their debut, , Dies, a go while you wait.

Gig season has finally kicked back in, and I was lucky enough to catch **Palm Reader** supporting the equally excellent Rolo Tomassi at The Garage in London a couple of weeks ago. Palm Reader hail from my delightful home town of Woking, home of H. G. Wells (author of The War Of The Worlds) and a stunning football team in the National League (currently resting at number 20 in the league table). Palm Reader released their third studio album, Braille, the other week, and it is a stone-cold stunner. You could tell the 600-strong crowd at the show were excited for their set, and rightfully so! They played new songs Swarm and Inertia to a sea of nodding heads and flying limbs. If you're into the likes of Cave In and Converge, you really need to delve into this band's entire back catalogue from old to new. Support this band – they're something really special!

Next up, **Turnstile** have been on constant repeat for me over the last few weeks, so much so that I've struggled to listen to anything else! Their new record, Time & Space, which came out in February, has exploded onto the scene with their own take on Bad Brains/ Shelter-style hardcore, with Real Thing and Generator quickly being crowned as some of modern hardcore's catchiest new songs.

I deliberately avoided writing the end of this article until I heard the new **Will Haven** record, Muerte. And I'm so glad that I did, because I have been entirely consumed by this album for three days straight and I still can't get enough of it. It contains everything that I loved from their previous records, Carpe Diem and Voir Dire, and then some. The stand-out track for me on this one is El Sol, which has a very special guest on it: Deftones' Stephen Carpenter. The riffs he brings in are absolutely devastating. This band are vital listening for people who are into doom, metal, hardcore or whatever's crushing, because they somehow blend all heavy genres into something entirely their own.

Until next time! **K!**

CATCH JUSTINE ON TOUR WITH EMPLOYED TO SERVE – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFO

> **"PALM READER ARE SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL..."**
> JUSTINE JONES

Gouge Away: Angry, apparently

Palm Reader: Just one stool between five of 'em

Turnstile: Their minicab sideline was not a success

KERRANG! ROCK CHART

Denmark's MØL are taking blackgaze to odd new places. Like the Number One spot, for a start...

MØL: Great Danes

	ARTIST	TITLE	
1	MØL	BRUMA	NEW
2	SVALBARD	REVENGE PORN	▼
3	THE FEVER 333	MADE AN AMERICA	▼
4	FIVE FINGER DEATH PUNCH	FAKE	NEW
5	PARKWAY DRIVE	WISHING WELLS	▲
6	STAND ATLANTIC	CHEMICALS	▲
7	MIKE SHINODA	CROSSING A LINE	▼
8	JUDAS PRIEST	FIREPOWER	▼
9	BURN THE PRIEST	INHERIT THE EARTH	▲
10	JONATHAN DAVIS	EVERYONE	▼
11	BULLET FOR MY VALENTINE	OVER IT	↔
12	ZEAL & ARDOR	GRAVEDIGGER'S CHANT	NEW
13	THE WONDER YEARS	SISTER CITIES	▼
14	FALL OUT BOY	CHURCH	▼
15	CARPENTER BRUT	BEWARE THE BEAST	▲
16	CODE ORANGE	ONLY ONE WAY	↔
17	FIZZY BLOOD	PINK MAGIC	▼
18	ROLO TOMASSI	THE HOLLOW HOUR	▼
19	GROUNDCULTURE	CONFESSIONS	▼
20	THIRTY SECONDS TO MARS	ONE TRACK MIND	▼

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LIFE IS HEAVY

BIRTH. SCHOOL. ROCK. DEATH.

He may be a gentleman and a scholar now, but JAMIE LENMAN wasn't always so refined. Just watch out if he ever crashes in your spare room...

THE FIRST SONG I REMEMBER HEARING

THUNDERCATS THEME TUNE
BERNARD HOFFER (1985)

"I know it doesn't have many lyrics, but then neither does No Limit by 2 Unlimited and that's a classic for the ages. The ThunderCats theme is so exciting and rocking, with this huge insane guitar solo and a big old brass section. It's got everything!"

THE FIRST SONG I EVER FELL IN LOVE WITH

(EVERYTHING I DO) I DO IT FOR YOU
BRYAN ADAMS (1991)

"What a song, what a voice. I was maybe eight when it came out and I was already quite romantic, so I was struck by the longing in the lyrics and his delivery, singing about this fantastic person – whoever they might be. My cousin programmed the backing track into his keyboard and I used to bore our entire family by singing along at the top of my little lungs!"

THE SONG THAT INSPIRED ME TO BE IN A BAND

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY
QUEEN (1975)

"It was when it was re-released for the Wayne's World movie soundtrack. After that I bought Queen's Greatest Hits and it was so awesome. It was also around then that I started my first band, with me on vocals and my mate Chris Hawes on guitar. We were called Sheer Power and we were both nine."

THE FIRST SONG I EVER MOSHED TO

JERRY WAS A RACE CAR DRIVER
PRIMUS (1991)

"I was always far too nervous to get into the pit at shows, but one time a friend and I decided we loved the metal breakdown in Jerry Was A Race Car Driver so much that we wanted an ultimate mosh just to ourselves, so we put the mattress from his bed onto the floor and... well, it was utter chaos. A word of advice: don't ever slam-dance on a mattress. You'll break your arse!"

THE FIRST SONG I LEARNED TO PLAY

TO BE WITH YOU
MR. BIG (1991)

"It was in the heady Sheer Power days. It's a big old rock ballad with simple chords and a huge chorus – perfect. I wish I could say it was something cooler, but I'm a child of the '90s. I still love it."

THE SONG THAT PICKS ME UP WHEN I'M DOWN

YOU'VE CHANGED
SIA (2010)

"This was before she became a mega pop star. It's so happy and upbeat and the message is so uplifting that you can't help dancing. Her voice, too, is incredible – especially on the really high notes. What a talent."

MY FAVOURITE SONG TO PLAY LIVE

HELL IN A FAST CAR
JAMIE LENMAN (2017)

"It feels fresh and new, and although the parts are quite complex it's surprisingly easy to play. I feel like it gets across what I'm trying to do in a neat three-minute package – it's got this big old riff so it's quite heavy, but it's also sort of poppy with these close harmonies and falsettos. It lets people know what I'm about."

THE SONG THAT WAS THE HARDEST TO WRITE

DEVOLVER
JAMIE LENMAN (2017)

"It was a real struggle. Mostly things come out organically – the verse and the chorus are basically 'free', if you like, and then I have to do a bit of work to find out how a song will resolve itself, but usually if I sort of let it simmer it'll come to me eventually. I concentrated really hard for weeks, and took my guitar with me everywhere I went. It ended up so long and complex because it kept going to new places whilst I was trying to work it back round to the resolution, but eventually I got there, so I'm really proud of it."

THE SONG I'D LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED FOR

SCARED OF THE POLICE
REUBEN (2002)

"I've come to the conclusion that you can't really worry about what you'd like to be remembered for, because by definition that's a choice that others make after you're gone. As a solo artist moving forward in my career I'm always happy when people focus on my newer material, but folks still shout out for songs from my old band [Reuben] like Freddy Kreuger or Scared Of The Police, because that's what's struck a chord with them. I would never say that Scared Of The Police was one of my best songs, but it's as good as any, I guess. You can't get worked up about it; just be happy that you're remembered at all."

THE SONG I'D LIKE PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

CALL ON ME
ERIC PRYDZ (2004)

"It will come as no surprise to learn that I've already made plans for my funeral, including a gold statue of myself to be erected on the Ash Vale roundabout while my widow makes a speech about what a great lover I was. This must be played *loud*. It's such a banger, it's impossible to feel sad hearing it."

DEVOLVER IS AVAILABLE NOW VIA BIG SCARY MONSTERS. JAMIE LENMAN PLAYS DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL IN JUNE – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFO

"Previously, on Peaky Blinders..."
"SLAM-DANCE ON A MATTRESS AND YOU WILL BREAK YOUR ARSE"
JAMIE LENMAN

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"I GET CHOKED UP AT ROMCOMS!"

When he's not running from the law, **MURRAY MACLEOD** dishes out some real pearls of wisdom...

HEMINGWAY INSPIRED ONE OF OUR ALBUM TITLES

"Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man And The Sea was the inspiration for the title of [2014 album] There Is Only You. Reading that book made me realise there really is only you that can carry on the good fight. You can't rely on others to make yourself feel better; you have to fight for that light at the end of the tunnel. Self-worth is a very powerful and very important thing."

I WAS TOLD OFF BY THE POLICE AS A KID

"Me and my two friends broke into private gardens in a really rich part of town. Someone called the police, so we had to run through people's gardens and hop fences to escape. We reached the main road and four police cars turned up – it was *so* ludicrous! I was younger than my friends, and they gave fake names and addresses, but I was frozen in fear. I was like, 'They're lying to a police officer – we're going to get *life* [in prison]!' That was my 'big' brush with the law. I need a better one than that..."

ADAM LAZZARA MADE ME STARSTRUCK

"We toured with Taking Back Sunday in 2011, and on the first day, Adam Lazzara walked in to our dressing room and was like, 'I *love* your album!' and pulled out his phone to prove that he'd bought it on iTunes. I was like, '*That's insane!*' He was side-stage for the show, singing along. He's super cool, and a total gentleman."

SIMPLE ADVICE HELPED CHANGE THE XCERTS FOREVER

"Musically, the best piece of advice I ever got was to buy a tuner. It was from this guy who worked in a record store in Aberdeen – he was really cool. He almost reminded me of John Cusack in High Fidelity. Considering we were that young, we just hadn't thought to buy tuners. But then it changed our band forever. I'm sure we would have eventually got them, but it took someone to say something!"

I MET MY BANDMATE IN THE HEAD TEACHER'S OFFICE

"Myself and Jordan [Smith, bass] met when we got called up to the headmaster's office at school, for something that we did that neither of us can remember (*laughs*). We were sat down in the office, and Jordan's case was so big – his files were stacked up like Everest. Mine was super small!"

MY BIGGEST REGRET IS NOT TELLING SOMEONE THAT I LOVED THEM

"I'm very aware of taking control of the moment now. If you want to say something, you should say it, because it's either going to be a yes or no answer. Your life doesn't change if that person says, 'I'm really sorry, I'm not in love with you.' You'd be crushed, but, really, you're in the same position that you were five seconds beforehand. But the gain is so much better if they're like, 'I love you too!' Your life is completely changed and it's a big, *big* win, so you should always just go for it."

THE XCERTS' HOLD ON TO YOUR HEART IS OUT NOW VIA RAYGUN. THE BAND PLAY 2000TREES IN JULY

WORDS: EMILY CARTER **PHOTO:** GOBINDER JHITTA

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"Here's the best Fall Out Boy fan art I've ever done. An Infinity On High doll's house," says **@_carcrashheart**. We have to say, this is hands-down the finest, most detailed FOB doll's house that we have ever seen. It is also the first, but that changes nothing.

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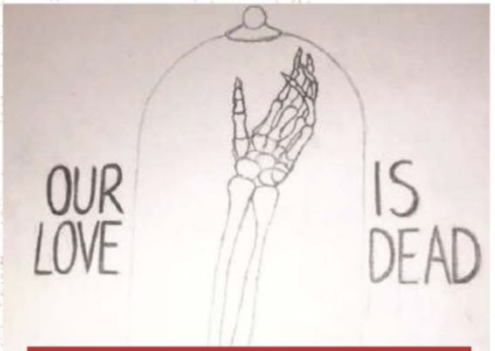
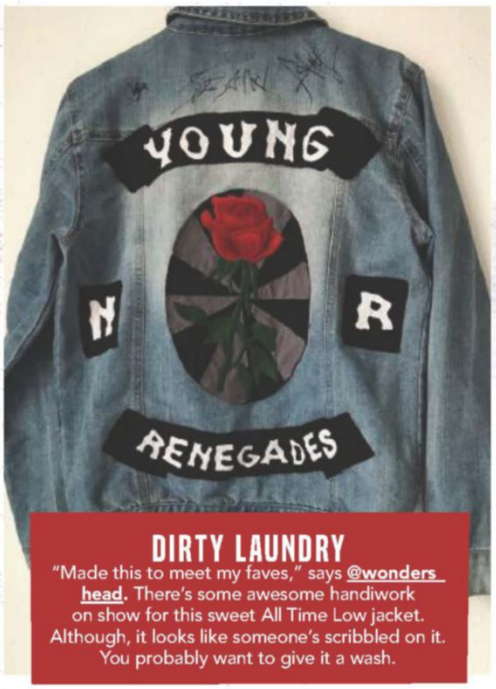


RAD TO THE BONE

"My Creeper lyric drawing! Never had so much difficulty drawing a hand before but it was all worth it ahah, hope you like it," says **Lucy Cheyne**. Looks like you really put those, ahem... Poison Pens to good use, Lucy!



DIRTY LAUNDRY

"Made this to meet my faves," says **@wonders_head**. There's some awesome handiwork on show for this sweet All Time Low jacket. Although, it looks like someone's scribbled on it. You probably want to give it a wash.

JUST JOSHIN'

"Would my life have ever been complete if I hadn't met Josh?! The answer is NOPE," says **@rencox_**. We're glad that your life is complete. But what about the other two-thirds of your face?

POP-PUNK POSSE

"Me and my All Time Gang," says **@BeebolsStronzo**. You want to be careful joining a gang, pal. Especially a pop-punk one; those turf wars can get serious.

WINNER!

GRINNING GROHL

"Hi Kerrang!, here is a pencil drawing of Dave Grohl I'm sending you that I did for my mate's birthday present a while ago," says **Stupots**. This is glorious, Stu. And congrats! You've won this week's prize – a pair of tickets to Nickelback's UK arena tour. Give us a shout at Feedback@kerrang.com to claim them.

MECO MADNESS

"I drew this on the plane to Barcelona, I am loving the new album from Press to MECO!!," says **Magic Williams**. Yeah, this is weird as hell, Magic. But we're sure that the Press to MECO boys would absolutely be into it.

NEXT WEEK

WIN TICKETS TO SEE MARMOZETS

Kerrang! have teamed up with Marmozets to offer a pair of tickets to their upcoming UK tour. The Bingley noise-makers' latest UK stint kicks off at The Waterfront in Norwich on May 4, where they will be armed with material from new record Knowing What You Know Now. To be in with a chance of nabbing the tickets, we need you to tweet your coolest rockstar selfies and artwork with the hashtag #Kommunity, or email them over to Feedback@kerrang.com. For more information on the tour, visit Marmozets.co.uk.

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COVER STORY

THE MAKING OF A LEGEND

Before there was **SLASH**, there was Saul Hudson. And before there was the iconic, all-conquering rock god, there was the ordinary person who suddenly had the world at his feet. Ahead of **GUNS N' ROSES**' return to the UK this summer, Kerrang!'s Sylvie Simmons takes us back to 1991, unearthing a lost interview that reveals the man behind the many myths...

PHOTOS: ROSS HALFIN

I first met Slash when I first met Guns N' Roses, in a back room in their manager Alan Niven's Los Angeles HQ. He was a skinny kid in black jeans and a black T-shirt with a torn neck and bandana. If it looked like he'd slept in them, it was because he had – the van where they'd just driven back overnight from a show in a bar somewhere or other was parked outside. His face was half hidden by an explosion of black curls.

I didn't know much about Guns N' Roses – no-one did, although word on the street was growing. This being the mid-'80s, when metal and hard rock bands were making a fortune for the music business, the back alley behind the fleapit where Guns lived was packed with A&R men offering record deals – or running in the opposite direction when the band scared them off. Guns had a reputation for being dangerous.

They'd just signed to Geffen, and Alan had stepped up to the plate as their manager, and with UK metal having a sharper edge to it than Poison and co. in the U.S., he had come up with the idea of taking Guns to the UK to tour with an EP before letting them record their debut album. Alan played me the songs and I loved them. He asked me if I would interview them, to give them an idea of what to expect from the UK rock and metal press when they got there. Starting as he meant to go on, Axl decided that he didn't want to be interviewed with the rest of the band, he wanted me to talk to him on his own. So in that first interview, Slash, somewhat reluctantly, I felt – there was a shyness to him; he was happy to hide behind his hair – became the kind of spokesman for what Guns-minus-Axl felt about the band, rock music and the meaning of life.

I can't count how many times I've talked to Guns over the years that followed – from the days of playing the Marquee in London, through the tragedy of the deaths at Castle Donington in 1988, to the Stones tour and their own stadium extravaganzas, their break-up and reunion – and I almost always talked to Slash. He was always honest and frank, even during the dark drug years. Unlike Axl, Slash was never one for game-playing. A guitar god who's modest? Yes, they do exist. I also remember visiting his house, meeting his pet mountain lion and the snakes who provided the name for his first side-project, Snakepit.

The last time I saw him was just a few months back, in LA, at a mutual friend's place, and we sat and chatted over tea. He's beefed up a bit from that kid I first met, but otherwise – for all the rockstar mythology that surrounds him today – he's still the same.

Sylvie Simmons, April 2018

London, September 1991

The plush Conrad Hotel at Chelsea Harbour has for some reason – maybe it's the copious amount of Moët & Chandon champagne in the minibar – become the favourite new hotel for the kind of rock'n'roll bands who in the past were inclined to trash this kind of place as a matter of principle.

Guns N' Roses have just checked in. The biggest rock'n'roll band in the world are playing huge sold-out shows on the back of two of the biggest, fastest-selling albums ever, and in spite of that, or maybe because of that, the atmosphere is electrifyingly tense and difficult; there were people – many of them insiders – who held their breath until the London show (at Wembley Stadium) was over. Izzy Stradlin, some said, had no intention of performing; the day before the show no-one even knew if he'd arrived in London; and Axl – well, he was just being Axl.

Axl right now is in his hotel suite, burning up nervous energy on the state-of-the-art exercise equipment he takes everywhere. Matt Sorum is off wandering the hotel corridors in search of more traditional rock'n'roll 'exercise'. Duff (McKagan) is playing back some of the tapes he's recorded for his solo album, Believe In Me; Izzy's with his girlfriend – they're not even staying at the same hotel. And Slash is kicking back in front of a TV set with the sound off, a pack of cigarettes, a hamburger and a bottle of Jack Daniel's.

He's telling me about the strange thing that happened after last night's show. He was backstage talking to Brian May, Queen's guitarist, when an elderly man and a teenager approach them and say to Slash, 'Hi, we're your grandfather and cousin; can we have your autograph please?'

"I'D BEEN HOPING THAT ONE DAY, OUR ABILITY WOULD SURPASS THE HYPE"
SLASH

"I hadn't seen them in 15 years! When my dad finally decided to move to the States for work purposes (he designed rock album sleeves), I went along with my mum and everything, and we never kept in touch. I was pretty much… not a tearaway, but I was off tripping around, doing my own thing, and all this time has gone by, and I sort of built up my own life in the States, so I was gone. The only times I ever did have an opportunity to come back, I didn't know where they were.

"And then out of the blue I got a letter. One of my uncles is a rock fan – he turned me on to The Moody Blues when I was still living in England – and he was reading a Jethro Tull article in a magazine and he saw the names Ola Hudson (Slash's mother), Saul Hudson – Saul being me – and that's how they knew how their relative was.

"I knew they were coming but I didn't know who they were. I was really nervous about it for a little bit. After the show I was sitting there fucking exhausted going, 'Okay, I'll just have a drink and I'll go out.' And when I saw them, they had fucking baby pictures of me, the whole thing! Very bizarre!"

Slash laughs. "But it was cool, it's just an example of how weird this whole fucking business gets."

It's no secret that since this tour began there has been a great deal of tension and conflict within Guns N' Roses. Minutes before the band is due to go onstage, it's not unusual to find at least one band member missing and the rest of you on the verge of killing one of the others. What's going on? Why are you like this?

Slash: "Because the main thing that I've seen going on is with everything we stand for, and the whole regimen of touring on this level, being the headlining band in these huge places with all this money and all this shit going on around it, it just builds up. It's like success has infiltrated what the band is about sometimes – a whole crew of people tugging on us from all different directions. And it comes to a head sometimes, it really does, like, 'Fuck this!'

"But then at the same time you have got this responsibility. You can't just show up whenever you want because people will tear the house down – and I've seen what that's like.

"Even though we're on tour and supposedly hugely successful, these 'rockstars', we're all deafeningly human, to the point where it's like, 'Jesus!' You've got to try to maintain some semblance of security in your personal situation, while at the same time you're being completely thrown to the sharks. And yet we wanted this, we wanted to be here. So here we are (*laughs*)!

"We're just a little more volatile than most bands, because we're not just willing to give in and go, 'Okay, whatever you want, we'll do that for you.' It's a pissed-off band. It always has been. But all the [songs] aren't like that. A lot of them are stuff you can actually stop and listen to. It's not all negative. It's not all pissed-off and 'fuck this' and 'fuck that'. Some of it's really humorous. I think a lot of people fail to see that."

Are Guns N' Roses taken too seriously, or not seriously enough?

"I think we're taken too seriously and not seriously enough, and for all the wrong reasons! But fuck, at this point I'm not going to fight it that much!"

The press, especially in America, takes you seriously as a threat to social order. Not just the rock press – everything you do that's not 'nice' is splashed over the front pages of newspapers.

"I don't even think they expect us to be nice any more. I think they now see us as their puppets. It's really just sensationalism; like, if there's nothing to write about, let's talk about Guns N' Roses' latest antics. When you actually meet them face to face, some of them are a little paranoid, like I'm going to smash a bottle in their face or something. Some of them want you to (*laughs*)! I haven't been able to figure out the psychology behind that! And if there's nothing they can say, they make it up.

Slash, before he could even afford a shirt

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO SLASH

Straight-talking takes from the mouth of a legend

LIFE
"I've always had to do things my way and I'm still here, whether or not I deserve to be is another story."

ROCK'N'ROLL
"Being a rockstar is the intersection of who you are and who you want to be."

GROWING UP
"My mom used to go out with David Bowie; he was the first guy to replace my dad when my parents separated."

ATTITUDE
"Poverty is where that 'fuck you' attitude comes from, because you do what you have to, to survive."

IDENTITY
"The last person to call me Saul was my late grandmother – I've been Slash since high school."

FAME
"We were a gang of heathens who thought we knew everything, but in reality we knew nothing."

FASHION
"That's a wonderful side effect of [wearing] leather pants: when you pee yourself, they're more forgiving than jeans."

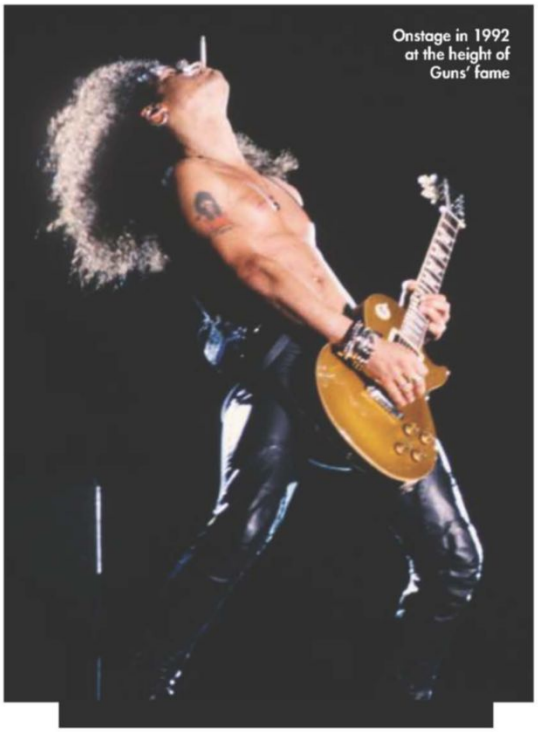
HEROES
"One thing I never did was sit down and try to learn from fast guitarists too carefully – except (UFO's) Michael Schenker."

Who needs an actual motorbike anyway?

"What I'd been hoping would happen at some point in our career is that our musical ability – going out there as a rock band and kicking ass – would somehow surpass the hype someday. But as all this time has gone by, people are still digging for stuff. As soon as you set foot outside the door there's a guy watching you with a fucking camera. And on a personal level, I never thought it was anybody's business what we do."

Is rock'n'roll supposed to be safe?

"No – that's what's wrong with the whole business. Everything's so predictable in rock – 'You can't say this and you can't do that, make sure that you sing to the little girls and do as much press as you can, and don't say anything offensive.' That's nothing to do with what rock's all about at all. Rock'n'roll – my impression from growing up around it, and I was born in a rock'n'roll hospital – was for freedom, rebellion, this sense of letting loose, getting away from the everyday shit that you have to deal with. And it needs to be honest and a little bit aggressive, and it needs to maybe shock a few people. It should go as against the order as possible.



Onstage in 1992 at the height of Guns' fame

"IF WE LOOK PISSED OFF, IT'S BECAUSE WE ARE"

SLASH

"Everybody points their finger at us because we're that rowdy, crazy, fucked-up, whatever rock band that they think we are. If a woman came up to you in the street and said, 'I hold you responsible for turning my kids onto drugs,' what would you say? My personal feeling is the band's never sent out any messages, we don't advocate what to do or don't do. What we sing about is our own personal lives. If they're too stupid to realise that, then that's really not my problem. It's just a band. A fucking rock'n'roll band! And in the general scheme of things, it really doesn't matter as far as what's going on in the entire planet."

What, if anything, is a musician's responsibility?

"It's to yourself. Your own personal integrity, to satisfy yourself, to accomplish what your goal is, to be able to do that and not let that go – that's your first responsibility as a player. To the public? You can't think about that. It's too heavy. It sort of squashes your whole reason for being around, you know what I mean? As it is, there's so much going on around you. I mean, if you could do your own security, be your own roadie, build your own stage, it would be different, but that's fucking impossible. So you've got so many people involved that you sort of feel like you're in a whirlwind! And that's what you get for being successful – and like I said earlier, if you weren't, you'd be sitting here moaning, 'Fuck, why can't I get this across (*laughs*)!' So it's a vicious circle. What the fuck can you do?

"People expect us to be responsible – and we're like the most juvenile, irresponsible thing going on that people flock to. It's like the circus. It's a bigger than life thing. I know I went through it too – I'd go see whatever band it was and I'd be like in awe. And they're just people, plugged into an amp, twanging away and prancing around!"

You've been called "a brutal band for brutal times". What do you think of this description?

"A lot of it has to do with, even when we first started, we had so much opposition and we really had to struggle just to keep the band together and survive. Because the kind of band that we were wasn't anything that people were expecting. They didn't want us in their house, so to speak, even if it was on plastic! We were like, 'This is the way we're going to do it, so fuck off!' So we made a record and we sang about all the shit that we've been going through as a result of our success, and situations that people would probably like to keep to themselves – everybody goes through them – and the drug situation, which was a result of us being off the road and being bored. And now that we're on the road, people are still trying to force us to do and to be certain things – and we just explode!

"We can't go out and do a good show unless we get really emotional. And if the shows start to get predictable, like, to the point where it's just a job, the feeling behind why we're up there – we just wouldn't be able to express it. So we just go out and do our own thing, and if that makes us look pissed-off, it's because we are."

Has rock'n'roll lived up to what you

October 2017, onstage at New York's Madison Square Garden

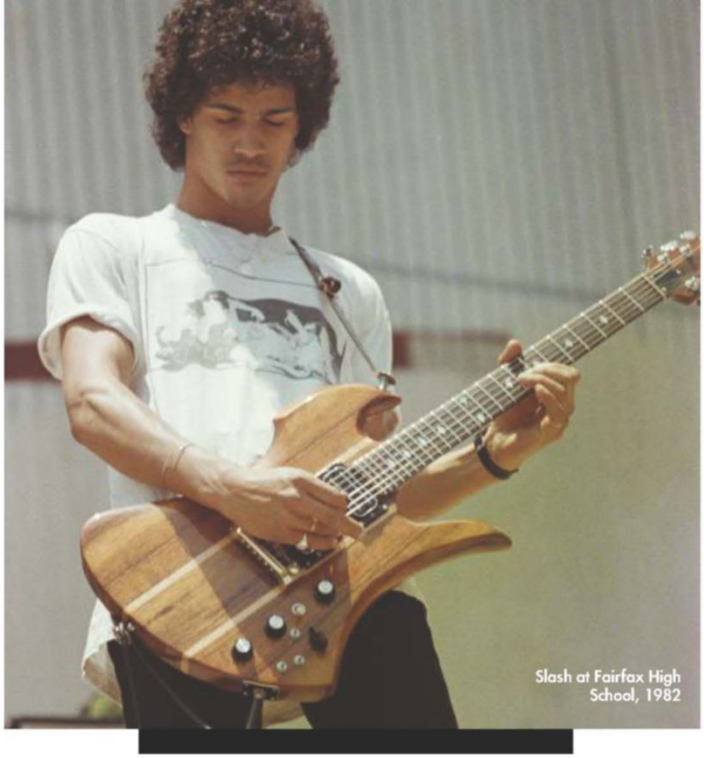
expected and wanted when you first got into a band?

"I've always been in a band since I started playing at 14 or 15, but I never looked at it like I was expecting anything in particular, how it was going to be or what life was going to be like, because I always went through this whole thing in stages. I was trying to get to the next club. Yeah, maybe I tried to predict what the club was going to be like, and I'd have my fantasies about that. And then it went from doing clubs to doing lots of clubs, and it became predictable, to where I knew it was going to be really dirty and we were going to sweat a lot!

"But from there it got to a point where we had no idea what was going on, because it got so big. And I think we're very naive in the sense that we do everything so very much our own way, so we don't really have any expectations.

"I had a lot of warning signs from bands previous to us – the whole drug thing, of course, the Aerosmiths, the Led Zeppelins, the Stones. But having gone through that without seeing it coming, really, at this point it – we're – nothing like I ever imagined it would be. We'd go out and keep getting on bigger stages with the same equipment!

"The material side of it was never a thing with me. The bigger we got – not that I'm complaining, because I'm not – the more of a pain in the ass money was. I was better off when I didn't have any money. I never carry cash anyway, and I don't go shopping. I appreciate having money. I'm financially at a point where I can have room service without worrying. I can feed my cats, feed my snakes – I don't have to worry about little things like that. I have one pair of jeans, and if they really do finally fall apart, I can get another pair. These [clothes] are the things which I've had



Slash at Fairfax High School, 1982

"I WAS BETTER OFF WHEN I DIDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY"

SLASH

since we did the last record! If they still work, I don't need any others."

Do you sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and not actually believe that you're the guitar player in the biggest, most successful rock'n'roll band in the world? That none of this is real?

"The biggest? That's just something someone else says. I'm just a little kid when it comes to this stuff. I trip out when I see us in the paper and I change the channel when I see us on TV, because it scares me. I really avoid the whole hype part of it. What freaks me out is when we get in front of that many people. To know they're there just to see us – that's really moving, you know?"

In a relatively short time, Guns N' Roses seem to have done so many almost mythical rock'n'roll things. You almost broke up onstage during your opening set for The Rolling Stones; Clint Eastwood wanted you in a movie; Aerosmith's Steven Tyler and Joe Perry handed their 'Toxic Twins' T-shirts over to you when you toured with them; Mötley Crüe gave up drugs after partying with you. You've also personally received a number of accolades from your fellow musicians: Brian May of Queen is a fan, Michael Jackson is having you play on his album, and artists as diverse as Bob Dylan, Iggy Pop, Alice Cooper and Lenny Kravitz want you on their records. As so much has happened to you so quickly, can you picture where Guns N' Roses will ultimately end up in rock history?

"You've touched on something that lately I've thought about a lot. God, we have made a hell of a lot of fucking noise, but where down the road are they going to put us in the rock history kind of thing? I wonder if the '90s are even going to be significant, because so much nothing was happening as far as music goes. So what are they going to do with us? Are they going to 'Led Zeppelin' us? Or are we going to be one of those bands like Aerosmith – a huge band they just, like, forgot about really quick? I thought about it. But I didn't come up with an answer, because I don't have a crystal ball." *K!*

GUNS N' ROSES HEADLINE DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL THIS JUNE – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFORMATION

SLASH... PICKED APART!

The guitar god's finest riffs – deconstructed

PARADISE CITY

The main motif from Guns' record-breaking debut's fourth single has an almost funky swing to it and is based around the chromatic notes leading up to its root of G-flat, almost like an exercise. It's similar thinking that spawned previous single Sweet Child O' Mine, which came from Slash practising his string skipping while the band warmed up at their notorious Sunset Strip 'Hell House'.

BAD OBSESSION

Slash would be the first to admit he's borrowed heavily from Jimmy Page's guitar work in Led Zeppelin, and Bad Obsession could very well be a tribute of sorts to their genre-defining swampy '70s blues. Using a slide on his left ring finger to snake over the frets in an open tuning, this is what makes his guitar growl on one of Use Your Illusion I's more honky-tonk moments.

YOU COULD BE MINE

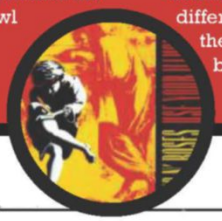
After the pounding drums, chorus-ridden bass and swirling feedback, just shy of a minute in, Use Your Illusion II's lead single breaks into one of the heaviest GN'R riffs of them all. During the verse, Izzy Stradlin's chords hang loose on the left and ride the mid-tempo, while Slash's snarling double stops are panned on the opposite side, dialled in with more gain. This delicate balance of finding different ways to play the same riff is what brought much of the magic to the twin guitar assault.

ESTRANGED

The weeping guitars that fade in after the piano-led intro could well be Slash at his best – using big bends at slow speed to create melodies that feel more vocal and expressive, almost taking the role of singer before Axl comes back in. It's this ability to serve the song that made Slash more famous than arguably any other guitarist to emerge in the '80s – forsaking that need for speed in pursuit of something more profound.

SLITHER

Unlike the vast majority of Slash's work prior, this single from Velvet Revolver in 2004 used a Drop D guitar tuning. It allowed him and rhythm guitarist Dave Kushner to play power chords that only required one finger at a time, as well as pedal off the Open D that the guitar was tuned to. As a result, the tones are extra gritty and sludgey – which is why this track feels more like heavy metal worship than the classic rock riffs upon which Slash built his career.



GUNS N' ROSES

PHOTO: GETTY

GUNS N' ROSES

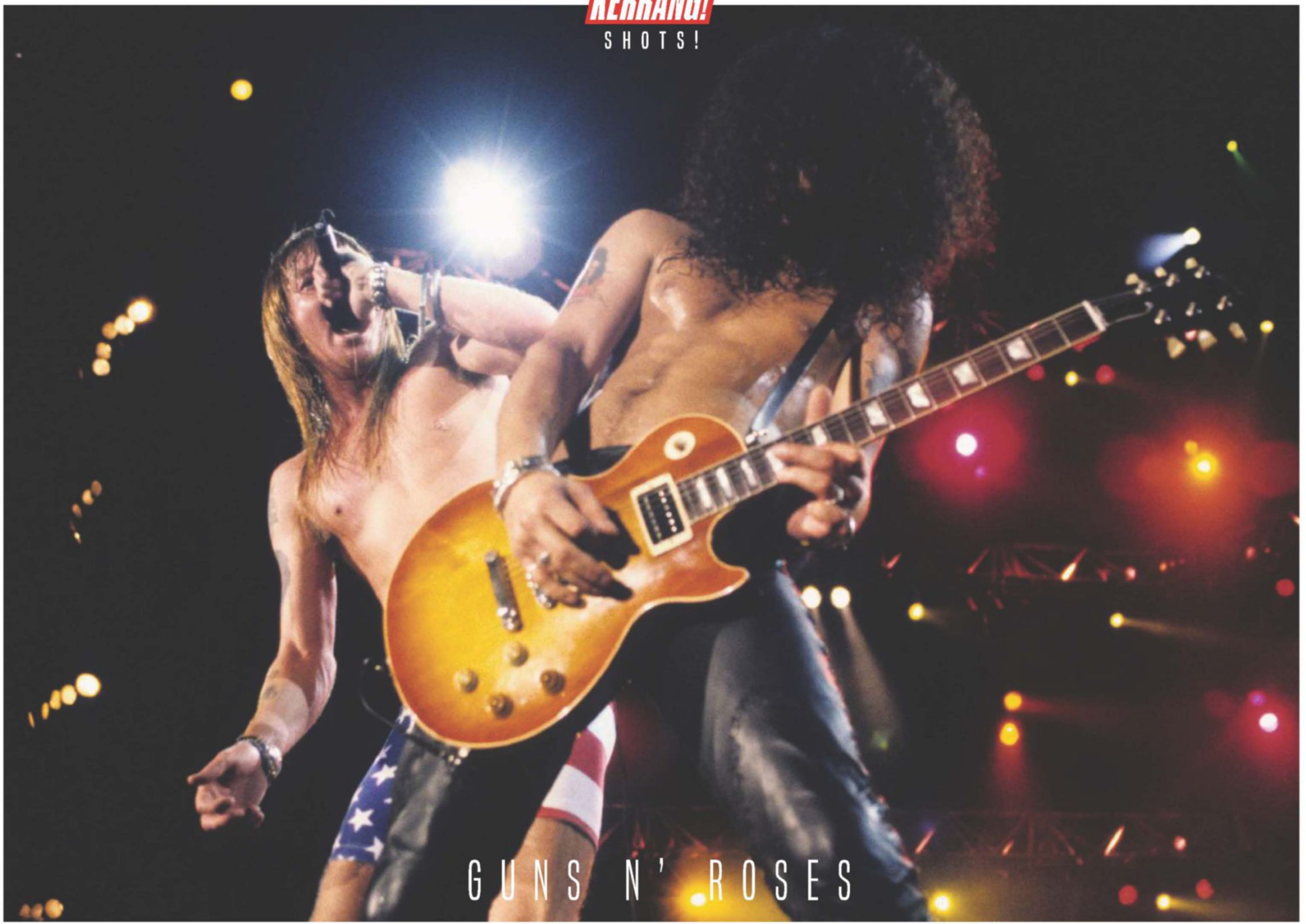
AXL ROSE

PHOTO: GETTY

TEENAGE RUNAWAY!
Rock-and-roll is her lullaby! The nearest bar her only home... the road she travels tonight is a one-way highway to hell!
LIVE FAST. DIE YOUNG
MARY MURPHY
NORMA EBERHARDT
SHERIDAN COMERATE
MICHAEL CONNORS

GUNS N' ROSES

PHOTO: NEIL ZLOZOWER/ATLASICONS.COM



GUNS N' ROSES

PHOTO: GETTY

GUNS N' ROSES

PHOTO: BETTY

THE K! INTERVIEW

"There's absolutely NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING HATED"

ADAM 'NERGAL' DARSKI
BEHEMOTH

WORDS: SAM LAW PHOTOS: OSKAR SZRAMKA

Adam 'Nergal' Darski is getting ready for a night on the town. It's a chill early-spring Saturday evening in Warsaw and convention dictates a night of "meeting friends, flirting with girls and rocking like motherfuckers". He's already braced for tomorrow morning's hellish hangover. Chatting as dusk settles, the extreme metal figurehead speaks with the relaxed clarity of a man ready to get some things off his chest.

"It's been a long time since I've done any interviews," he explains, warmly. "It's been a long time since there's been a reason to do any. I have a need to talk – to express myself!"

Onstage, we've grown accustomed to the black-metal maverick; the firebrand; the blasphemer. Off it, we've come to know the intelligent, urbane, infinitely-cordial individual; the philosopher; the entrepreneur; the renaissance man. Twenty-seven years since Behemoth's first rumblings behind a collapsing Iron Curtain, and almost 41 into his tumultuous time on this earth, Nergal simply sees himself wringing every idea and opportunity for its fullest potential to best use the time he's got. The clock is always ticking and there's not a second to be wasted.

2010's battle with Leukaemia hangs prominently in the background. It's an experience that still informs his sense of urgency. A year on from the release of Me And That Man's blackened-blues debut Songs Of Love And Death, and four since the release of Behemoth's The Satanist, the gears are already shifting on new artistic output. Commercial

This is what happened to the last person who crossed Nergal

When your accumulator comes in and you've nailed that sweet solo

OV FACTOIDS AND THE VOID

The beginner's basics on all things NERGAL

BORN: June 10, 1977 in Gdynia, Poland.
LIVES: Between Warsaw and Gdansk, Poland.
EDUCATION: Graduated MA History from the University of Gdansk. He's also qualified to be a museum curator.
BANDS: Behemoth, Me And That Man.
SPECIAL SKILLS: Business management, talent-show judging, upsetting the establishment.
MOST LIKELY TO SAY: "Hail Satan!"
LEAST LIKELY TO SAY: "Fuck it, I can do it tomorrow…"
HE'S A LEGEND BECAUSE: Twenty-seven years into his career, he's established himself as extreme metal's unstoppable force – cancer, controversy and court cases mere speedbumps on an impressively ever-upwards trajectory.

BETTY

and creative opportunities – from energy drink sponsorships to his growing empire of barbershops and nightspots, to TV appearances like his stint as a judge on Poland's The Voice – are carefully considered. And that continued controversy bubbling in his conservative, Catholic homeland (his most recent court appearance revolving around a T-shirt 'disrespecting' his country's coat of arms) is shrugged off with a sense of clear-eyed perspective.

"I'd like to be adored by adults who understand my art," he grins, knowingly. "But there's absolutely nothing wrong with being hated by the ones who don't…"

Your new Messe Noire DVD thrillingly documents The Satanist era. How does it feel looking back?

"I see a multitude of moments. Put them together and you get the impression of this massive amount of work and this huge achievement. I came out of this near-fatal situation and didn't know what to expect, but we just kept on raging."

The album cycle extended over three years…

"It was never-ending, but we were super motivated. Seeing how the record was received, we knew that it was now or never, so we just kept pushing. Strike again. Strike harder. Benefit from it. We travelled around the globe at least twice. Each passing season, we could see ourselves graduating up the bill. We were climbing that metal Everest!"

You seemed to tease that it might be your last, too…

"People seemed to dramatise the fact that I mentioned The Satanist could be our last record. They're like, 'Oh, you're splitting up!' and I'm like, 'I just don't know…' (*laughs*) I'm just unsure about the future. I don't know if I'm going to be alive tomorrow. I'm not teasing, I'm just being a realist. After what I've been through I realise that life is super fragile."

So, what comes next?

"We will release another Behemoth record. Tracking is done; it just needs to be mixed. We're ready for another fight, and to get on the road for another war. It feels like we've got a lethal weapon that can kill anyone in our way."

How does it sound?

"It's strong. It's honest. It's conquering. It's uncompromising. It's very radical; very extreme in many ways. There are beats and rhythms and riffs that will make people think, 'Wow, it's cool that they went that far!' but then it goes somewhere that's primal and raw."

Not much pop-punk influence, then?

"Fuck that!"

Has Me And That Man changed how you approach Behemoth?

"Absolutely. Throughout The Satanist cycle, I never once touched my guitar to create new extreme music. I felt like there was none in me. But I did feel like I needed to clear this mellow, bluesy stuff out of my system. I felt like I had to follow my spirit, to be able to look in the mirror and feel proud in that flash of self-reflection. It did well despite being so niche: just two old, sad, depressed men…"

And then?

"It was like I'd cleared through my system. I went back to my black metal cave and couldn't stop creating new Behemoth music. [Behemoth bassist] Orion had to tell me to hold off, 'Stop, we've got too much!' That's never happened before. Normally when I complete a record I'm worn out; the well is dry and I don't want to write anything more for years. Now I'm looking into that well of inspiration and it's still half-full."

You've missed a bit there, mate

Satan is all well and good, but do you ever feel the need to lyrically lighten up?

"It feels like that Luciferian, Promethean [identity] is in my DNA. I can try to reject that. But, as the Greeks say: 'Know thyself!' I would rather die than deny my nature. [My creativity comes from that same place as poets John] Milton and [Percy Bysshe] Shelley, [occultist Aleister] Crowley, [poet] William Blake and the Bible itself."

Which formative moment set you on the way down this path?

"I will always remember my little tipsy father coming back from work with an acoustic guitar when I was seven or eight. I still don't know where the fuck he got it. He was probably playing cards with some drunken friends and won it. As soon as I saw it, I was sold to the Devil! That was the moment I signed my pact…"

You grew up in Catholic Poland. When did your relationship with religion turn?

"There are three sacraments growing up in the Catholic church. The first is baptism, just after you're born. They put some holy water over your head and all of a sudden you're part of a church. The second is communion, age eight or nine. Coming up to the third [confirmation] aged 14 or 15, I'd already started questioning things. The inner-voice was asking, 'Is this you?' and the answer was, 'No, it's not…' Metal was a catalyst to that rebellion. I was beginning to move towards the unknown…"

Which bands, specifically, sparked that rebellion in you?

"Blasphemy, Venom and Bathory. Samael's Into The Pentagram was a huge song here in Poland. They were the bands where I could really understand the lyrics and imagery. I was a massive Tiamat fan, too, and when Johan Edlund would sing, *'I turn to you and say, "I worship Lucifer"'* [on The Scapegoat], his was the voice of enlightenment and the voice of truth. That was 26 years ago and it's never really changed."

Could you conceivably have followed any other path?

"It would need to be something that would offer a way to express myself. When I was a kid, before I even grabbed a guitar, I was into drawing and painting. My mother could barely drag me away from my notebook. Apparently I had some talent – I'd always get the best marks in school, and I remember a discussion that my parents might send me to art school. I've actually been working on some new artistic installations in the past few years…"

What impact did landing that early record deal with Tomasz Krajewski and Pagan Records have?

"In the early-'90s, releasing a CD was an expensive process. With the inflation in Poland's early democracy – no exaggeration – the average monthly wage would buy you maybe only three or four CDs. They were luxury products. For 16 or 17-year-old kids living in a block of flats with our parents and no money because we were at school, it meant the universe. It was a game-changer!"

You still went into education, though…

"I had decided to quit education, and then I had a wake-up call. I was 18 or 19 and I was busy, but the band wouldn't pay my bills. I was already living on my own, I had my own shitty Polish car, and I was just about to get my first cell phone. I was broke as fuck. My parents were happy to support me – while I was still in full-time education…"

You finished, qualifying to be a museum curator, too, right?

"When the band became strong enough to support me, of course I could've quit, but when I start something I like to finish. If I play side A, I play side B…"

Isn't educating yourself part and parcel of that refusal to blindly follow?

"I prescribe to [Calvin Coolidge's philosophy], 'The world is full of educated derelicts.' I felt that joining the university community would help expand the potential of my brain. I like

the duality of being that absolute savage onstage, splattered in blood, blaspheming, making occult symbols, and on the other hand, I have a diploma and I can put a sentence together. That's why I called my book Sacrum Profanum [The Sacred And The Profane]."

Do you ever actually intend to practice as a museum curator?
"Never (*laughs*)! That's not my energy. I love to read and to see stuff, but do I want to be in there covered in dust? No, I'm born to do things using my weapons, my energy and my ADHD."

Those attributes are better suited to running barbershops, nightspots and – most impressively – acting as a judge on Poland's The Voice, right?
"I did The Voice to satisfy my curiosity. I wanted to see the TV world. I wanted to face that beast, to see if it was cool or not. And when I was doing it, I was digging it. I was transparent about the money, too. When I came out of hospital, I was in debt. The band wasn't making money. I had to pay medical bills. I needed money and I did it to survive. But there's nothing wrong with combining business and pleasure."

What do you say to naysayers who claim pop contests and men's grooming 'aren't metal'?
"I've never read the rulebook that says what the metal icon is supposed to do. I really hope that book doesn't exist. Before I'm a metalhead, a musician, anything, I am myself – Adam Nergal Darski. If you have a problem with that, you have a problem with yourself. One of the fundamental teachings of Satanism is, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law…' It's about freedom to explore your potential in any way that you want!"

"THE STAGE IS MY TEMPLE. I AM THE PRIEST"
NERGAL

In a way, you were actually dragging metal into the field of view of a larger audience…
"There is no bigger 'fuck you' than to get out of your cave and throw extreme metal in the face of the mainstream. Maybe they choke on the sacrilegious, blasphemous chaos; maybe they devour it. Either way, that's how you unleash chaos on narrow minds. My choices on The Voice were the contestants singing Metallica and Nirvana. I even had this seven-months pregnant lady singing Run To The Hills – and she nailed it."

A degree of celebrity accompanied that role. Do you still feel that appealed to your 'performer spirit'?
"It didn't change me in any way. It just reminded me there is this other world I'm not a part of. Maybe they thought they could civilise this animal. I have no problem going into that nest of wasps. If you have a strong core, you can never lose credibility."

Does that philosophy extend to your energy drink sponsorship?
"I got offered a shitload of money to [represent] Demon Energy drinks and I accepted that cheque. A month later they stopped distributing it because a massive part of the Catholic community in Poland boycotted the parent company as long as they kept working with this 'devil'. I kept the money and I was laughing."

Do you still regard those boycotts, protests and court cases against your art as 'a tax on freedom'?
"The stage is my temple. I am the priest; I run my mass by my rules. You're not welcome if you don't agree to those rules. It's a stage, it's art, and it's a theatre. It may offend. It may be too much for you. My line in the sand in court was that this is my art in my space. It's not like I'm ever going to throw a grenade into a church. I don't want to interfere in other people's freedoms to believe in and worship whatever they want in whatever way they want. That's your temple. This is mine. Deal with it."

What's at the root of your fixation on those damned 'anti-heroes'?
"I see no logic in choosing the angels' side or the gods' side. I see no logic in identifying my fallen nature with the deities who are so faultless. I'd rather identify with someone who represents my imperfection. Of course it's all metaphorical anyway – I don't believe in anthropomorphic deities. I use them for aesthetic reasons. Christianity found scapegoats, but I think that's a misinterpretation. For me, those characters can be uplifting."

How important was retaining that value-system during your battle with leukaemia?
"I felt that there were all these voices saying, 'Now he's going to pray to God…' That's often what happens to people who have near-death experiences. For me, that's weak. In some ways, I became even more radical. It was an [opportunity] to stick to my guns and prove my fundamental beliefs. That sense of rebellion empowered me."

What was the most important lesson you've taken from the experience?
"That life is super fragile, and that it could end any day. I've definitely became more effective by saying yes to life. I'm not waiting for anything. I'm a man of action."

What advice would you pass on to your younger self?
"Read and understand your contracts…"

When the time comes, what would be written on your tombstone?
"Lived, loved, conquered."

And, what if you found yourself in front of Saint Peter at the pearly gates?
"I have been honest, I have no regrets and I can be proud. I reject the existence of the deities, but if I'm wrong I have nothing to fear…" ***K!***

BEHEMOTH'S LIVE CD/DVD MESSE NOIRE IS OUT NOW VIA NUCLEAR BLAST

Hard to see what the Catholic church are upset about, really

Which Game Of Thrones season's this?

Easy on the factor 50 lads

Anyone up for a bacon sarnie?

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TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

No-one expected ASKING ALEXANDRIA to still be a band more than a decade down the line. Least of all themselves. Over to vocalist DANNY WORSNOP to have a drink and reminisce…

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE PHOTOS: ANDY FORD

Danny Worsnop sits at the bar in The Black Heart in London and orders a shot of tequila. It's long been his drink of choice, preferably enjoyed onstage, as he did earlier tonight in this very room. The singer is in the UK to take care of "visa stuff", and ever the restless spirit, decided to play a hastily-organised acoustic show in the intimate confines of this Camden boozer, rather than sit idly in his hotel room.

The resulting 15-song set was comprised of solo material, covers, and, of course, a handful of tunes from Asking Alexandria, the band he fronts – completed by guitarists Ben Bruce and Cameron Liddell, bassist Sam Bettley and drummer James Cassells. Despite Danny's undeniable vocal prowess, it was never his intention to be a singer, despite Ben's certainty that he was the man for the role.

Ben had formed Asking Alexandria in 2006 while he was living in Dubai, releasing an EP (Tomorrow.Hope.Goodbye) and an album (The Irony Of Your Perfection) before moving back to the UK – Nottingham, specifically – to recruit new members for a band that retained the name, but little else.

"Ben somehow got hold of my email address and asked if I wanted in," recalls Danny, who initially turned the offer down. "He wanted me to be the singer and I said, 'That's not for me.' Then, three months later, he asked if I'd be the guitarist, and I said yes. Before we knew it we had three songs. We were going to record Final Episode [(Let's Change The Channel), which would eventually appear on their first album proper, 2009's Stand Up And Scream] for prospective vocalists to sing to a guide track. So I did a version of the vocal and I was fired as guitarist on the spot."

And the rest, as they say, is history; one of spectacular highs (in all senses of the word) and crushing lows that's lasted 10 years.

"It feels like 20," says Danny with a wry smile. Despite his suggestion that in the past decade he's changed "in every way a person can", the grizzled 27-year-old still doesn't take things too seriously. "How has the band changed in that time? We're more popular and significantly less homeless than we were 10 years ago," he jokes before correcting himself. "Well, I say that; the other guys are significantly less homeless. I'm *actively* homeless now, but that's out of choice," he says of the nomadic lifestyle he now leads, one befitting a man whose debut solo album was called The Long Road Home.

Weirdest game
of chess ever

He downs another tequila in anticipation of this walk down memory lane.

"Ugh! There was still sambuca at the bottom," he grimaces, before grabbing a fresh glass, refilled with another shot.

Danny agrees there are few bands whose musical evolution, and changes in fortune, are as navigable by the albums they've released as Asking Alexandria. The quintet's self-titled fifth album, released in December of last year, includes the track Where Did It Go?, which he describes as both "a cannonball" and "tongue-in-cheek shit talk to 90 per cent of the rest of the [music] industry", but also acts as a kind of one-song synopsis of the band's career to date.

"We were finding ways to do little throwbacks on the album," says Danny of the song. "I thought, 'Why don't I just do the whole thing? You want to know why we're doing this shit? Well, I'll tell you, chronologically.'"

First came 2009's Stand Up And Scream, which the lyrics of Where Did It Go? describe as *'a triple gold one'* in recognition of its impressive sales, despite its naive, undisciplined approach.

"It was our first time writing an album, and my first time being a singer, so it was all over the place," suggests Danny. "There was no structure; musically it made no sense, there were no choruses or verses. Even lyrically the different sections didn't relate."

Despite these perceived imperfections, the album, as reflected by the lyric, *'The stole by every fucking band on summer tours one'*, was having a marked influence on their peers.

"Six, eight months later you could hear every band trying to copy it," laughs Danny, pulling at his formidable beard like a sage. "I feel like we've always been trailblazers."

That didn't mean that Danny was always enthused about what he was writing, suggesting he wanted to reign in that "chaos" on their second album, 2011's Reckless & Relentless, though his bandmates didn't know how they felt about the change.

"I was trying to use my *singing* voice more, because that's what I wanted to do, but there was resistance within the band," says Danny. "James [Cassells, drummer] was concerned that it wasn't heavy enough, and the others either didn't understand what I was trying to do, or were afraid of change."

Again, despite its largely rough and ready execution, it ended up being *'The knock the popstars off the charts one.'* "It knocked Adele off. That's when we started getting phone calls from TV shows, and getting traction on radio," he reveals. "We thought, 'This can be a real thing.' I thought, 'Okay, I'm doing the right thing by trying to write better, well-crafted songs,' because I felt like the world was saying, 'Yes, we like what you've done there – do more of that.'"

That side of the band certainly came to the fore on third album, 2013's From Death To Destiny, although its status as *'the fuck the world one'* was not down to rock'n'roll attitude, but something altogether darker.

"Oh, it was not a celebratory 'fuck the world,'" confirms Danny. "It was more, 'Fuck everything and shoot me in the fucking face!'"

This writer first crossed paths with Danny Worsnop on the eve of the release of From Death To Destiny. It was supposed to be a short interview to accompany the 4K-rated review of the record, but ended up being a near 12-hour marathon of debauchery. It was a brief experience of the kind of hijinks you often hear about but rarely encounter. For Danny, though, it was just another messy night during a very messy period – so much so that he has no recollection of it whatsoever.

"I was really fucked up back then," says this more restrained version.

Relations within Asking Alexandria were fucked up, too – to such an extent that Danny and Ben had recorded their parts for the album in separate studios, in different cities.

> **"ASKING ALEXANDRIA HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TRAILBLAZERS"**
> DANNY WORSNOP

"I'd take whatever [song] I was sent and chop it up, turn it into a completely different one, do vocals and send it back. We were at each other's throats, so even if they liked it, they *didn't* like it on principle."

Bad blood had begun to course through the veins of Asking Alexandria during the touring for Reckless & Relentless, with creative disagreements born from personal ones as intense expectations and punishing schedules soured friendships.

"There was personal stuff going on in everyone's lives and we weren't allowed to take a break," admits Danny. "We were told that if we had a week off, our career would be over and we'd never work again. So we were basically scared and threatened to a point where we weren't able to deal with our own problems and we were kept on the road constantly, because people just wanted money. There were fist fights every day, and we all knew that someone was going to break. I think that comes through in the songs; people heard Moving On and were like, 'Oh, he's leaving.'"

Danny quit in January 2015 to focus on his new band We Are Harlot, but does the older, wiser version think a hiatus would have stopped that happening?

"Yes and no," he says. "On one hand I think it would have slowed down the inevitable, but it taught us that if we need time for anything, we just say so and the show stops. That's more important than pushing ourselves to the point where we break and it's all over."

Despite suggesting his desire to leave the band was often placated by "enablers" that "filled [him] with booze and drugs" at a time he was trying to get clean, Danny says his post-Asking Alexandria endeavours saw him "walk straight into another party". And he insists he didn't give a second's thought to what was happening in the one he'd left behind.

"I still to this day haven't listened to it," Danny says of 2016's The Black, *'the wasn't me one'* made with Ukrainian vocalist Denis Stoff. "I have no interest in it."

Danny rejoined Asking Alexandria in October that same year, following Denis' departure. Though he admits he was "only hired for one tour", that soon changed.

"We reached a natural point when Ben and I went into the studio," he says. "We were recording Vultures, which is a song I'd always loved. It was emotional, I did one pass at it and Ben ran in and gave me a hug. We didn't say it at the time, but we both knew, 'It's on!'"

Danny admits that the rest of last year's self-titled album was written with a single guiding principle: "This is not the fifth Asking Alexandria album, this is the *first* Asking Alexandria album."

It may be one of the last too, Danny suggests, his drinking slowing given the knowledge he has an early flight back to the U.S. tomorrow (on tour he's in bed straight after a show these days).

"Contractually, we owe another album, but that will probably be it," he says. "We'll still make singles, as that's what people listen to when they stream music now."

Danny also foresees the band changing how they tour, mindful of falling foul of the pitfalls of the past, and the changing lives of his bandmates (guitarist Cameron and bassist Sam are both married, drummer James is soon to be, and Ben is married with two children).

"I wouldn't wish on any of them to not see their children grow up or spend time with their wives," he says, draining one final shot. "But for now we're still flying all over the world. We have fun, but more importantly, we're there to entertain people, give them the best show we can, and a reason to come back." **K!**

ASKING ALEXANDRIA'S SELF-TITLED ALBUM IS OUT NOW ON SUMERIAN RECORDS. THE BAND RETURN TO THE UK FOR DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFORMATION

A DECADE UNDER THE INFLUENCE

DANNY WORSNOP passes on some wisdom and advice to his 2008 counterpart...

"On your journey through the next 10 years, you should only think about and focus on the present and the future; there's nothing you can do about the past, so there's no point dwelling on it.

"Everyone likes to speculate and say that their experiences have made them who they are, but there's really no way to tell. If you don't end up doing the things you'll end up doing, you might not get as far, or you might get further, but who knows?

"As far as being a musician is concerned – don't do it! Only kidding; you should, but you'll be a broke one if you're *only* a musician. My advice would be for you to save your money, diversify your portfolio, and definitely don't pass up on the opportunity to invest in Spotify, it's going to be big, and people are going to stop buying music. Oh, and people are going to be asking you in every single fucking interview where the name Asking Alexandria comes from, so be better prepared for that!"

Danny wasn't sure his Lynx Africa was working

DIY CHAMPIONS

THE LIFE AQUATIC

Do it yourself, they said. It'll be fun, they said. As PALM READER have found out, being an independent band can swallow you whole. But on new album BRAILLE, they're coming up for air…

WORDS: SIMON YOUNG **PHOTOS:** ANDY FORD

Palm Reader were too shy to ask the DJ to play something they knew

Palm Reader are exhausted. Over the past two weeks, the band have covered some 4,000 miles across Europe while supporting fellow homegrown noise-makers Rolo Tomassi. Two days ago, they performed at Haarlem's Patronaat in the Netherlands before travelling to Glasgow on their day off, enduring a gruelling 16-hour ferry ride to Newcastle upon Tyne and another three hours in the van driving across the north of England and up to Scotland.

Four thousand miles in a cramped van would be a test for any band, yet the past fortnight has been anything but dull. They've paid off Slovenian police officers who accused the band of speeding (they weren't, they insist), they've attempted to repair a busted tyre and spent an evening in a crowded Parisian casualty department when guitarist Andy Gillan gashed his head open on a rusty bolt at the Olympic Café.

"I bent down to do something with one of my pedals, stood up and caught the back of my head on the bolt," he explains. "I spent so long waiting at the hospital that the blood congealed and they had to reopen the wound before giving me some staples, which was *lovely*. Apart from that, the tour was a really positive experience."

We don't need a chiromancer to tell us that this band's future looks in rude health, too. At the time of writing, the band's third album, the 4K-rated Braille, is currently occupying the top slot in iTunes' metal chart, placed above the likes of Judas Priest, Of Mice & Men and, um, Meat Loaf. A brief, Marvel-style origins story will help put that achievement into context.

It was in 2011 that Palm Reader formed in Woking, chiefly as a reaction to heavy bands churning out formulaic guff ad nauseam.

"We were sick of people writing the same songs and putting a different band name on it," says vocalist Josh McKeown. "It was so frustrating. We wrote songs that we wanted to hear and realised we had a knack for it and took it from there."

They even had a mission statement, tucked away in the corner of their Bandcamp page where you can still get a hold of their 2012 self-titled debut EP. It reads: 'We play loud. We play heavy. We play hard. We play fast. This band began with nothing else in mind.'

Three fifths of Palm Reader clearly oblivious to the giant falling piano

In short, they weren't fucking about. The quintet – whose line-up is today completed by guitarist Sam Rondeau-Smith, bassist Josh Redrup and drummer Dan Olds – played whatever gigs they were offered and built a fearsome reputation as a live band, releasing their debut album Bad Weather in 2013 and Beside The Ones We Love two years later. Seven years after their inception, Palm Reader now find themselves as frontrunners of the UK hardcore scene, partly through an admirable work ethic and some serious technical chops. Braille, regardless of its final chart ranking, will go some way to cementing their position.

"It's in a really interesting place," says Andy of the current UK scene. "There are a lot of bands doing their own thing really well, which is healthy. But we're in a really bizarre situation. With the first couple of albums, we were a new fresh, exciting – pick another adjective! – band on the scene, but now the third album is here, are we an established band? How do we establish ourselves further? It's a weird one. In a few years, it would be cool to do this full-time, but it's really hard to judge because a lot of bands have split up."

It's hard enough being a band in the current climate; many have to juggle day jobs and choose their annual leave wisely to play tours. For many acts, it's not a case of jumping in the van and playing just any old show anymore. There are many considerations to be taken into account and the challenge has gotten the better of some of their contemporaries who have called it quits in recent months.

"It seems to be an irritating trend that's happening in the UK," says Andy. "Adult life sucks because when you have things you have to pay for, you can't just go off on tour for two months. When it was all new and exciting, we would think nothing of driving five hours to play to no-one. But if you're going to get no money out of it, is it worth all five of us taking time off work just for that one show? You have to decide whether a show is going to be worthwhile and fun or not."

It's taken exactly three years for Palm Reader to record and release the follow-up to Beside The Ones We Love – quite the gamble, considering the momentum they had built with their debut EP and album Bad Weather, which was described in the pages of this very magazine as "a cannon-blast of breakneck hardcore brilliance."

But Braille marks a vast progression in the band's musical ambition and attention to detail.

Relocating from Woking to Nottingham – three hours up the M1 – the band rented a house in which they would all stay in order to focus on writing their third album.

"It was so we could have some sort of creative hub," explains Josh. "We were thinking about the album all of the time and couldn't escape each other. We're still there now."

The initial songwriting duties would be taken on by Andy, who would flesh out the ideas and demo riffs before sitting down with drummer Dan to give the songs a solid structure. A few older ideas from previous demos were rescued and housed in a brand new home, while the majority of the album was written from scratch. Swarm, the album's lead single and opening track, presented itself as an almost fully-formed idea one afternoon.

"It just happened," says Andy. "There may be times when we write a chorus, a verse or a middle eight in an afternoon, but that whole song – the bones and the meat of it – came together quickly and it was really surprising."

"BRAILLE IS ABOUT BEING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR EMOTIONS"
JOSH McKEOWN

"It's my favourite on the album because it always stood out," adds Josh. "It's something we're really proud of, especially as it was our first step into more melodic writing."

That's the thing about Braille. The aggression and sheer technical chutzpah remain, but throughout the 43-minute duration, the songs are shot through with soaring melodies and subtle nuances that will give Palm Reader a leg up over their contemporaries. In particular, listen to The Turn through headphones; there's intricate passages that ebb and flow in between the crunch and the thunderous closing riff, which cleans the palette for the woozy instrumental of Dorothy.

"Rather than wondering if it was loud or it was horrible and discordant, or if we could do something wacky with time signatures, we had to ask ourselves if it *worked*," says Andy of the recording process. "It's part of the reason why this album has taken a little while to come out; we had to make sure it was right rather than half-cooked. Releasing an aggressive album three times in a row won't do anyone any favours; there's enough bands doing that already. We want Palm Reader to evolve."

For frontman Josh, his lyrical contribution simply meant mining his notebooks for phrases and ideas; a vocalist who can be found reaching for his biro more often than not, he would scan his notes as Andy would play the demos.

"I've never struggled to write lyrics," he says. "I tend to write consistently anyway, just notes on bits and pieces. I've just been making notes on life, I guess."

Internal Winter, for example, was written in a flush of inspiration as the vocalist grieved the passing of a close family member.

"As a phrase, it means a season of negative emotions, feeling down and coming out the other end," he explains. "It's about how I dealt with that and acknowledged it and moved through it. It was incredibly cathartic. The title Braille is about acknowledging feelings. It's essentially about – pun intended – being in touch with your emotions."

And now their third album is out, Josh has mixed emotions about letting their creation go off into the wider world.

"I think a few people are going to be taken aback by it," he says. "There's an element of nerves, but more than anything because we've worked so hard on it and we're proud of what we've done. It's hard not to be excited about it."

And he *should* be excited about it. Although Bad Weather and Beside The Ones We Love were both solid records, and coupled with their ferocious live show, it could be argued that Palm Reader have cruelly not been given their due.

"The thing that's been coming up in reviews is that we've never been given the chance we deserve," says Josh. "That sounds a bit crybaby for me. It's not the way we actually feel either. I do feel like we've been overlooked slightly at times, but you can't blame people for that.

"If you do something that makes you stand out, that puts you in the firing line for people to pick holes in it. It's easy for people to take those shots," he adds. "We're proud of what we've done and can't wait to see what happens next."

Palm Reader are on the cusp of bigger things. And though they may be too modest to say so themselves, it *is* about time. **K!**

BRAILLE IS OUT NOW VIA SILENT CULT. PALM READER PLAY TEDDY ROCKS FESTIVAL IN MAY – SEE THE GIG GUIDE FOR INFORMATION

FEELING THIS

ANDY GILLAN takes a deep dive into the band's new album artwork...

"Jamie McDonald, who used to be in Bastions, did the artwork for Braille. We did a tour with them and Brotherhood Of The Lake a few years ago and we remained friends ever since.

"When we had a few songs demoed we sent him music and over time the visual idea came to the fore, as a lot of Josh's themes on the album are about sinking feelings and so on.

"I'm not sure how he got the shot as he plays his cards close to his chest when it comes to his art, but I think the image matches the atmosphere of the album perfectly. When we first saw it we thought it was an awesome cover.

"There are dark, muted turquoise-like greens which are complemented by the baby pink, and that goes with the moodier, heavy stuff and the slightly more uplifting, ethereal parts of the record.

"So much of the album is about feeling and finding your way through life, hence the title, Braille. The sense of being overwhelmed and sinking is where those aquatic elements emerged."

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REVIEWS

KKKKK = CLASSIC **KKKK** = EXCELLENT **KKK** = GOOD **KK** = AVERAGE **K** = POOR

None of M&L wanted to admit they'd forgotten to bring a map

MAXIMUM ROCK'N'MØL

Danish blackgaze quintet MØL use glacial beauty and caustic fury to dazzle and darken on awesome debut album

After several years of being very much an underground concern, blackgaze was introduced to the wider world thanks to an Apple keynote speech in September 2013. During a segment heralding the arrival of their colourful iPhone 5S and 5C models, the cover of Deafheaven's second album, Sunbather, was featured prominently during the presentation and online. Were the marketing people at Apple inspired by the San Francisco quintet's intense blend of nihilistic black metal and washes of shoegaze? Or did someone decide that the band's minimalist, peachy-pink cover art was a good fit for their campaign? Either way, it saw the tentacles of a niche subgenre tickle the mainstream.

Over in Aarhus, Denmark's second-largest city, five musicians gathered to add to the exciting sub-genre's growing list of bands. MØL – meaning moth, pronounced 'mohl' – recorded two limited-edition EPs. Now, some six years after their inception, comes their full-length debut, JORD.

"It denotes the ground that we all spring from, the ground that we will eventually end up in, our Earth," singer Kim Song Sternkopf says of their album title's meaning. "We want to communicate the impermanence of everything. Namely, that we as a species will end, as will the world. This is not meant in a dystopian sense, but of coming to terms with the transience of everything. The title encompasses these questions of our own futility and the human struggle to leave a permanent imprint."

Heavyweight questions deserve heavyweight riffs, and JORD has them in abundance. Opening track Storm begins with a simple refrain reminiscent of Angelo Badalamenti's Twin Peaks theme, before effortlessly marrying the primal, cathartic power of black metal and dreamy shoegaze. The heavier moments are apocalyptic enough, but it ebbs and flows with a sense of euphoria, largely thanks to Nicolai Busse Hansen and Frederik Lippert's inventive guitar interplay. It's succinct, yet one of MØL's greatest strengths is that they explore more ideas in a few minutes than many of their contemporaries do in twice the time.

Penumbra is initially buoyed by blastbeats and Kim's demonic vocals, before melting into a meditative passage where the guitars shimmer and sparkle, offering a moment's respite before dragging you even deeper into the melee. Vakuum, meanwhile, is a maelstrom of precise metal riffing and guttural screams, but it's Ken Lund Klejs' powerhouse drumming which stands out on the song, somehow keeping a sense of order amid the spiralling chaos. Next is Lambda, which showcases their shoegaze influences; a sumptuous instrumental which is perfectly-placed ahead of the audio assault that makes up the album's final surge: Ligament, Virga and the soaring title-track.

The eight songs on JORD are a truly masterful exercise in build and release. It's a fiercely accomplished record, where no idea outstays its welcome. It doesn't switch gears for its own sake; the tracks rise and fall just as you'd want them to. When they're going at it full pelt, MØL's riffs and vocals are stark and punishing, while the quieter moments will satisfy Mogwai and My Bloody Valentine fans alike.

Kim described the human struggle to leave a permanent imprint. Well, MØL can rest easy knowing that with JORD they've created a piece of art which will leave an indelible impression upon those who hear it. SIMON YOUNG

PHOTO: KIM SONG STERNKOPF

Q&A NICOLAI BUSSE HANSEN (GUITAR)

How do MØL typically piece together a song?

"Usually I will write the music for an entire song, or parts of it. Then I will record it at home and present it to the rest of the band, who will then comment on it. We will try it out in the rehearsal space to see what works and what does not. Then I will go home, make changes based on the comments of the band, and then rinse and repeat until we're happy. One of the exceptions to this process is Lambda, which is the only song we jammed out in the rehearsal space together."

How do you keep the tracks relatively concise?

"We write it at the length that we feel is natural for us. I've listened to a lot of shoegaze and written songs in that genre previously – I think that's the main reason, as opposed to coming from black metal and taking up shoegaze."

"MAKING THIS RECORD WAS VERY INTENSE..."
NICOLAI BUSSE HANSEN

What were the actual studio sessions like when you were making it?

"The studio sessions were very intense. We recorded during the middle of the summer in a hot studio called Grapehouse Studio in Copenhagen. We were also quite pressed for time, so we did not have too much time to play around in there. So it was quite a focused experience."

Did the album mutate from the original demos?

"The first demo that I wrote for Bruma, for example, is drastically different from the end product, but we knew going into the studio what we wanted from the songs' structure and sound. We made pre-production versions of all the tracks so that we could work from them. There were small changes when we did that – a few drumbeats were changed, and some details were added here and there. Again, this is mainly because we had a very limited amount of time in the studio."

REVIEWS

BRANCHING OUT?

BLACK STONE CHERRY prove there's still no place like home

It's difficult to think of a band more firmly anchored in time and place than Black Stone Cherry. The quartet honed their sound in a practice house used by local country rock legends The Kentucky Headhunters, whose line-up included drummer John Fred Young's dad and uncle. Their albums regularly reference their home state, and their songs are loaded with motifs that are pure Americana.

Edmonton, Kentucky (population: 1,585) is a world away from Edgbaston or Edinburgh. It should provide an unfamiliar frame of reference, but there's a universal appeal to the band's lack of pretension, their tales of home and family and, of course, the big bastard riffs they pack into them. So much so that the band are now established arena fodder on these shores, which isn't bad going for a band whose early ambitions were simply to get outside their own county.

Black Stone Cherry have made a success of being themselves, and Family Tree sees them continue to thumb their noses at fashion. That isn't to say there haven't been changes. Last time out, on 2016's brilliant Kentucky, they sounded like they had something to sweat out of their system, with a sludgy sense of aggression they'd never exhibited before. Family Tree was self-recorded in the same studio, but for much of it there's a more relaxed and playful vibe, like they no longer need to prove how low and downright heavy they can go.

BLACK STONE CHERRY

FAMILY TREE

(MASCOT)

KKKKK

Opener Bad Habit still kicks the door down with a barn-levelling monster of a riff, mind, before Burnin' channels the spirit of ZZ Top's Gimme All Your Lovin' via an insistent hook and controlled bursts of shredding guitar. Carry Me On Down The Road brings the bongos and a Slash-style epic solo, while My Last Breath is a set-piece show-stopper. A tribute to family framed as a letter to frontman Chris Robertson's son, it's emotional without being mawkish, and bolstered by big gospel-choir vocals.

Up to this point the album is all killer, but then comes way too much filler. Southern Fried Friday Night is as frothy as the title suggests, while Ain't Nobody dances around a less than stunning chorus. It's doubtful the couplet, *'You got the blues / I heard that you lost your dancing shoes'*, on You Got The Blues will be in line for an award, and the disposable I Need A Woman is sexy-time done throwaway style. Closer Family Tree, however, is a driving epic, and one of the most stirring things BSC have ever done. Sadly, by this point the momentum has ebbed just a little too much to make this album a classic. PAUL TRAVERS

PENNYWISE
NEVER GONNA DIE
(EPITAPH)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Bad Religion, Rise Against, Anti-Flag

■ *'The funny thing about history, it keeps repeating what we got wrong,'* spits Pennywise frontman Jim Lindberg on Something New. This year marks three decades of Pennywise. When they formed, they were angry at the inequality of life under TV-star-turned-president Ronald Reagan. Now, three decades later and on album 12, their anger at the inequality of life under TV-star-turned-president Donald Trump is only proving Jim right. Honestly, we can't wait for album 26 in 2048, which will be angry at the inequality of life under President One-Of-The-Kids-From-Stranger-Things – but for now, Never Gonna Die is 14 tracks of much-needed, middle-finger punk rock. Ragers like American Lies and We Set Fire respectively cut down fake news and austerity, proving that although the band's anti-authority message and thundering SoCal punk sound stay the same, in the context of 2018, Pennywise feel more essential than ever. Our bet's on President Dustin, by the way. **JOHN LONGBOTTOM**

SHIELDS
LIFE IN EXILE
(LONG BRANCH)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Emmure, After The Burial, Chelsea Grin

■ Any devout follower of contemporary metalcore who unflinchingly ascribes to the philosophy of 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' will likely be thrilled by Shields' debut full-length. You want hammering percussion underpinning dense chuggery *a la* The Acacia Strain? Sorted. Do you believe that such weight is at its best when played off against massive, shiny melodies? Not a problem. Harsh, Oli Sykes-esque vocals? Got 'em. How about some atmospheric elements that add an air of plaintiveness? Yep, and in the case of In The Grey, Love Is Dead and It's Killing Me, it's actually quite affecting. Basically, if you know you like metalcore, point your ears in the direction of Life In Exile, ditto if you crave generic 'angsty' titles. There is, of course, also the obligatory brief, pretty instrumental interlude, and this – like everything else here – is well executed. But, despite Shields' best efforts, the relentless deja vu ensures they never stand out from the crowd. **DAN SLESSOR**

FROM ASHES TO NEW
THE FUTURE
(ELEVEN SEVEN)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Linkin Park, Papa Roach, Hollywood Undead

■ *'We are the future,'* booms freshly-recruited From Ashes To New vocalist Danny Case on the title-track to their second album. *'We have just begun!'* Funny that, because The Future conjures its most potent imagery from the recent past. Coming on like the offspring of Linkin Park and Papa Roach, their sound owes everything to nu-metal and '00s alt.rock. Unfortunately, that hip-hop-pop-metal amalgam flowing through tracks like thumping lead single Crazy and the not-as-incendiary-as-it'd-like-to-be Wake Up comes across more like the product of some considered planning meeting than textured, individual personalities. Regardless, the slicker-than-greased-oil production job, odd glimpses of shimmering originality and rapper/programmer/bandleader Matt Brandyberry's steady hand ensure a solid baseline of thumping listenability throughout. It's just enough to make you think there's something more impressive coming further down the line. **SAM LAW**

TESSERACT
SONDER
(KSCOPE)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Linkin Park, Meshuggah, Periphery

■ 'Sonder' is a word meaning the realisation that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own. If that sounds complicated, well, it's the title of a tech-metal album, and such high-thinking comes with the territory. But TesseracT have undergone a reimagination of sorts here, becoming now snappier and more to the point than the meaning of that title would suggest, even if the brain power is still operating at full whack. From the Gojira-rivalling levels of heaviness heard on King and Juno, to the electronic post-rock dreaminess explored over Sonder's second half, this could very well be TesseracT at their finest. Most radical of all is the change in the pace of the songs themselves, pursuing an urgency rarely found within the labyrinthine tangles of progressive metal. This is the sound of an already killer band distilling their essence and producing a truly spectacular piece of work. **AMIT SHARMA**

CARPENTER BRUT
LEATHER TEETH
(NO QUARTER)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: The Prodigy, Grave Pleasures, Enter Shikari

■ Where to start with Leather Teeth? The second album by French synthwave loon Carpenter Brut is the neon-streaked soundtrack to an '80s film that doesn't actually exist, with big beats, turbo-charged keyboards and cheese turned up to the max. Just from the artwork, you can tell that every guitar solo comes from the Yngwie Malmsteen 'more is more' school of playing. And it's absolutely awesome. There's a seedy darkness pulsing through the chilled-out Cheerleader Effect and banging goth-trance anthem Beware The Beast (featuring vocals by Kris Rygg from Norwegian black metal oddballs Ulver, and Grave Pleasures frontman Mat McNerney respectively), a quality that revels in the dark excess of over-partying. Imagine Iron Maiden's Seventh Son… – a key influence on Carpenter himself – dragged into an '80s disco and replayed on fast-forward. That's what we're dealing with here. And it's one of the wildest, most captivating noises you'll hear in 2018. **NICK RUSKELL**

AWOOGA
CONDUIT
(ROCKOSMOS)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Tool, Amplifier, The Ocean

■ "In the exchange between the brain and the mind is the liminal place," says Tam Ali of Sheffield sludge-beasts AWOOGA. "This is where we reside. Brutality and tranquillity. All pass through the Conduit." This seems somewhat highfalutin for a band whose name is so ridiculous, but it suits what they do perfectly. There are plenty of crushing riffs on here, mixed with sudden bursts of jarring noise. The grooves are slow and hypnotic for the most part, but they can also build momentum until it crashes like an unstoppable, destructive landslide. At the other side of the equation, there are hazy swirls, jangly guitars and spiralling wisps of blue smoke that smell both exotic and illegal. There's nothing overly complex or manual-shreddingly original here, but the crystalline vocals, lush arrangements and explosions of volume are expertly woven. It's a confident and expansive debut album that announces AWOOGA like an alarm. **PAUL TRAVERS**

MELVINS
PINKUS ABORTION TECHNICIAN
(IPECAC)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Clutch, Butthole Surfers, Torche

■ One thing you can be sure of from a new Melvins record is that it won't be what you were expecting. This is a band who have proven over the past 30-odd years that they do as they damn well please, which on 2016's Basses Loaded meant inviting a host of underground luminaries to play bass. Here, two are welcomed back to hold down the bottom end simultaneously throughout this album's eight tracks. Alongside Redd Kross/OFF! man Steven McDonald, Jeff Pinkus finds his name mashed into the album title as a tribute to Locust Abortion Technician, the queasy 1987 masterpiece by his band Butthole Surfers. More apparent than the doubling of four-string duties is that this album finds Melvins at their goofiest. Beatles and Butthole covers rub up against tunes called things like Flamboyant Duck and Prenup Butter, as the quartet have a blast throwing everything against the wall. It might not be Melvins at their most essential, but their status as rock's quirkiest heroes remains irrefutable. **OLLY THOMAS**

HAGGARD CAT
CHALLENGER
(EARACHE)

KKKKK

FOR FANS OF: Kyuss, Queens Of The Stone Age, HECK

■ After the sudden demise of Nottingham's maddest metal band HECK last summer, Haggard Cat – the side-project of frontman Matt Reynolds and drummer Tom Marsh – have been thrust into the spotlight. Like their former band, Haggard Cat (a slightly less silly name now they've dropped the 'Bothday Present' bit) create a cacophony of thrilling noise, and this debut hits you with an ear-damaging line of fuzz, with riffs so dirty you'd be forgiven for thinking they'd just done a Tough Mudder course.

Opener The Patriot sets the tone with the sort of colossally-overdriven guitar you'd expect to find on a Kyuss album, while the stomping blues-driven foray of Bone Shaker is made for sunny festival afternoons. It's less chaotic than their HECK days, but by controlling their previous incessant need to create anarchy, the members of Haggard Cat have honed their craft and created something more accessible, while still maintaining that sense of urgent, frantic fun. Proof that some musicians will always land on their feet. **JAMES HINDLE**

LIVES

KKKKK = CLASSIC KKKK = EXCELLENT KKK = GOOD KK = AVERAGE K = POOR

SYMPH' WAVE

EVANESCENCE

MOTORPOINT ARENA, NOTTINGHAM

03/04/2018

KKKKK

An ambitious, emotional night for EVANESCENCE, as they go orchestral in the Midlands

There's a moment tonight – and it is just a moment – when you wonder if Amy Lee can continue. It's time for the encore and she's sitting alone at her grand piano, about to play Speak To Me, a ballad she recorded for 2017 film Voice From The Stone. "I know many of you have suffered great losses, and I want you to know that I'm with you," she says, before her voice falters. She begins a sentence that she cannot finish. "And we will get through it," she finally whispers. "We will."

It's been that kind of night. From start to finish, the fresh, symphonic approach to Evanescence's lauded music Amy and her band have taken on this tour is genuinely immersive, the dark heart of the songs beating to a new pulse. The band's Synthesis tour allows the emotions that propel their turbulent masterpieces even greater exposure. If Amy's struggling to maintain her equilibrium at the end, who can blame her? The audience themselves are in bits by the time the band get to a stunning rendition of the already aching My Immortal.

The band are all present, along with a classical orchestra, and they're backed by producer Will 'Science' Hunt who conjures up galactic-scaled synth waves

PHOTOS: PAUL HARRIES

and extra percussion. Evanescence's drummer – also named Will Hunt – plays an electronic kit, triggering stark, metallic beats. Majestic as this is, it's all just the dressing that surrounds the music's core, Amy's stunning voice.

Although Evanescence albums and tours are as rare as yeti sightings, when Amy does articulate what's inside her, she does not do it by halves. Lost In Paradise is a mighty spectacle, the music rising to repeated crescendo with Amy scaling every peak. Lithium caresses and soothes, with the symphonic backing only enhancing what is already a beautiful and impassioned song, before a wave of audience recognition greets Bring Me To Life. The new version does indeed wake you up inside, and it's doubtless a lot closer to the singer's original vision than the familiar, rap-rock take that shot Evanescence to fame back in 2003.

VIEW FROM THE

MERCH DESK

Hoodies? Shirts? Yeah, yeah, yeah, great. But come on, would it have been too much to ask for there to be an option of an inflatable violin? Or maybe a 'humorous' piano key tie? You'd think the orchestral tone of the night writes the merch plan itself. You're less silly than we are, Amy…

Later, seated at the piano, Amy does not shy away from the impossibly high, impossibly lingering notes in Your Star. It's all there. Oh, and then it's My Immortal. *'You still have all of me,'* she emotes as the song recedes into a delicate piano refrain, and the arena glitters in a starscape of cell phone lights. It's a song that always reaches people, however it is performed. It's something about that basic human urge to release sadness, a need that perhaps explains why such an elusive artist as Amy remains the recipient of such loyalty. She is, without question, one of the most powerful women rock has ever been blessed with.

"The only way to get through heartbreak is to get through it together," she says to the audience, explaining what the song means to her today. "So thank you for what you have given to me."

That's Amy Lee – who definitely still has all of us. STEVE BEEBEE

Amy's rendition of Chopsticks was a real show-stopper

Q&A AMY LEE

(VOCALS/PIANO)

Has it been a big challenge, reworking the songs for an orchestra and playing them with different musicians in each city?

"Obviously we've had to adapt our sound to make space for the extra musicians. The songs aren't as you hear them on the albums with a full orchestra trying to find their way into them. There's space for them to play within the songs. It wouldn't make sense to play with all these talented musicians and only be able to hear their contributions on the margins of the songs."

What's it like working with musicians from such a different background to a rock band?

"They're different from rock musicians. They're able to look at a musical score and hear the music in their heads. They don't need to learn a piece or to rehearse. That's what they do when they go in and play a film score – they just go into a studio, see the music and play it! It's a whole different thing."

Is there anything different you've had to do onstage in order to make the band and the orchestra work together?

"We have a conductor called Susie Seiter out on the road with us. She's just fantastic and it means that whatever musicians we play with, I don't have to worry about what they're doing. Susie's great. In fact, she's a new mother, so she's actually kind of a superwoman as well as a conductor."

FACE IN THE CROWD

Is this you having a lovely night at the opera with Evanescence? Well, you've won a T-shirt! Send a pic of yourself and your ticket to Feedback@kerrang.com to claim your prize!

TO THE WONDER

THE WONDER YEARS launch Sister Cities with a sell-out gig in the capital

THE WONDER YEARS
+ A.W.
02 ACADEMY ISLINGTON, LONDON
11/04/2018
KKKKK

"Look! I'm a railway signal!"

PHOTOS: THOMAS BROOKER

■ Dan 'Soupy' Campbell is recounting the time his band performed at tonight's venue some eight years ago. "We played this stage in 2010…" the frontman begins, before remembering an onstage accident. It involved some overzealous spinning, a stumble over the monitor, and then a moment of shock: instead of being flocked by rescuers, a gig-goer seized their moment in the limelight. "They grabbed my mic and started singing, and I thought, 'Well, this is how I die…'" he jokes. It's one of very few moments tonight that The Wonder Years' leader actually pauses for breath, but it's a welcome anecdote to break up the intensity.

Conversely, opener A.W. spends plenty of between-song moments telling tales. Having recently come out as non-binary, the singer-songwriter's admirable honesty – both musically and otherwise – makes for a captivating warm-up.

It's all just a taste of what's to come, though. With no backdrop and only a handful of lights illuminating the band, The Wonder Years' understated production heightens the impact of opener Pyramids Of Salt. Other newbies from their recently-released Sister Cities album – It Must Get Lonely, We Look Like Lightning – segue into the set list in similar fashion, before the band's pop-punk roots rear their head in the form of Coffee Eyes and Came Out Swinging. So far, so earnest. And then comes the curveball: a mini-set of tracks from last year's Burst & Decay acoustic EP. It is, admittedly, a touch out of place, not just because Dismantling Summer effectively loses its 'oomph', but there are much classier rooms for these renditions to be aired (two nights ago's gig setting being at a church, for example). That said, it does serve as a reminder that The Wonder Years have come exceptionally far in their career. And as Passing Through A Screen Door and Cigarettes & Saints culminate in soggy shirts and even soggier eyes, you can't imagine a better way for them to begin their new era. EMILY CARTER

Dan's cigar-mic was really quite the contraption

BLACK LABEL SOCIETY

+ MONOLORD

ROYAL ALBERT HALL, LONDON 05/04/2018

KKKKK

Ozzy's axeman turns historic venue into a Viking feast

■ Zakk Wylde: Ozzy's longest-serving on/off axeman, founder of Black Label Society, and absolute berserker. Tonight, not only is the veteran shredder invading a place more accustomed to orchestras, he's also doing a lap of victory around its inner perimeter while shredding on a guitar balanced behind his head. Welcome to the wildest night at the opera you'll ever experience. Opening the night up, Swedish doom trio Monolord crank up the fuzz in a mind-jarring fog of psychedelic doom, like a '70s liquid light show bubbling its way through your ears and into your nervous system. The headliners, on the other hand, have no cause for subtlety – they rip through Genocide Junkies, Funeral Bell and Suicide Messiah as if it were Thor himself hammering our eardrums. Flags of late Pantera guitarist Dimebag Darrell are raised for tribute In This River, before closer Stillborn nearly brings down the ceiling in down-tuned heaviness. Beating his chest to bid farewell, the guitarist's rebel mantra of Strength, Determination, Merciless, Forever still rings true after all these noisy years. **AMIT SHARMA**

TIGERS JAW

+ SLAUGHTER BEACH, DOG

STEREO, GLASGOW 11/04/2018

KKKKK

U.S. alt.rockers bare their teeth at riotous Scottish stop-off

■ "No-one ever chanted our name before we came to Scotland," grins Tigers Jaw mainman Ben Walsh, as Glasgow duly bursts its lungs. Safe to say, it's an evening of incongruity. The Scranton alt.rock mob are all about pulsating outfit and washed-out melancholy, but tonight's crowd is cranked to 11. First, though, the oddly named Slaughter Beach, Dog. Fronted by Modern Baseball's Jake Ewald, their cocktail of slide-guitar, stream-of-consciousness emo, and Weezer-ish nerd-rock proves mightily intoxicating. "Everyone alright out there?" gasps Tigers Jaw bassist Luke Schwartz as the crowd comes unhinged. "Because it looks like a war zone from up here!" The normally-introverted Never Saw It Coming has just seen a tsunami of stage divers crash into the crowd. One dude's even scaled Stereo's central pillar. This is not your average Tigers Jaw show, with Follows and Guardian serving as sweat-saturated party anthems. By the end, every bleeding heart is slamming out of its chest. It's an eternalised blend of the ridiculous and the sublime. Altogether now: "Tigers! Fucking! Jaw!" **SAM LAW**

Mike joined the world's rowdiest toilet queue

LOWER THAN ATLANTIS

+ MILK TEETH

KOMEDIA, BATH 09/04/2018

KKKKK

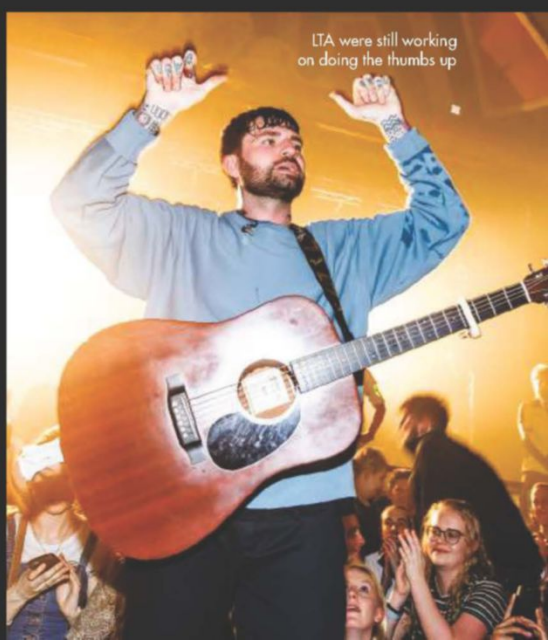
Lower Than Atlantis ditch the big rigs for a regional getaway

■ As the saying goes, mighty oaks from little acorns grow. Around this time last year, Lower Than Atlantis were standing before nearly 5,000 people at London's O2 Academy Brixton, with Mike Duce's hoodied face displayed on giant screens. Yet it wasn't such places that made LTA the wrecking crew they are today. It was towns like their native Watford, often overlooked by touring bands for their richer, smokier cousins. It is that impetus that sees them playing an arts centre in Bath tonight, on a tour of small clubs off the beaten track.

Before them, Milk Teeth may be missing vocalist/bassist Becky Blomfield, who's taken a break from touring after the band's hectic schedule left her burnt out, but you can't keep good punks down. As guitarist Billy Hutton belts out the back-and-forth vocals during Brickworks and Oli Holbrook practically bashes the screws out of his drum kit, medals are deserved all round for sheer electric force.

Of course, the gold belongs to LTA. Truth be told, they could flatten this place in their sleep, but they dig into the big-booted choruses of Work For It as if it were Wembley Stadium. Yet the in-your-face nature of this show means Mike is soon grinning and thrashing away at Far Q's punk riff in the centre of a circle pit. Even more intimate is an unplugged Another Sad Song, bolstered by a gently singing crowd sat cross-legged around the frontman. But there's no denying the rock'n'roll theatrics of Here We Go, as Mike jumps headfirst into the crowd again, with a cheeky injection of the sleazy lick from Electric Six's Gay Bar.

It's ballsy. It's personal. It's unadulterated rock'n'roll fun. In short, everything Lower Than Atlantis are. **JAMES MACKINNON**



LTA were still working on doing the thumbs up

PHOTOS: CHRIS CASEY

GET IN THE VAN

MARMOZETS

Touring family? This lot are an actual gang of brothers and sisters. Welcome to their weird, wild and wonderful inner circle...

PHOTOS: TONY WOOLLISCROFT

WHAT GOES ON TOUR...

Vocalist BECCA MACINTYRE budges up on the bus...

Our favourite movie to watch on tour is... Hot Rod – classic.

The first thing we do when we get to a venue is... I light incense to make the room smell all pretty.

The one rider request is... Yorkshire Tea tea bags. We're boring. No divas here!

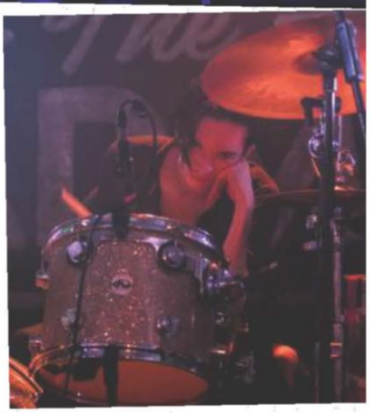
The golden rule of our tour bus is... There isn't one. Rules are made to be broken, right? No matter how shiny it may be.

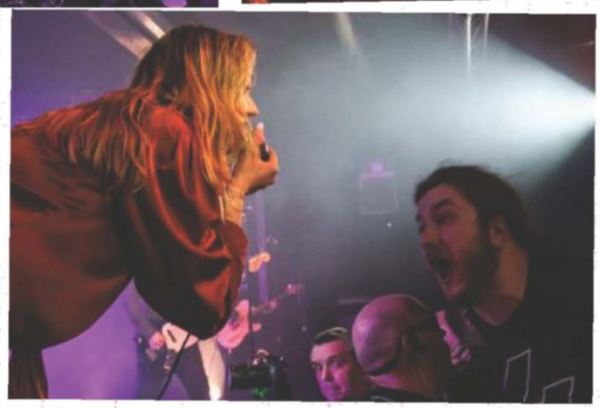
The one phrase you're likely to hear a lot is... 'I've gone burgers,' which roughly translates to losing the plot.

The atmosphere just before we go on stage is... Pretty good. You only have one opportunity to seize everything you ever wanted. We take it.

The tour bus smells like... Leftover pizza (always a bonus for breakfast) and spilt beer.

The saddest thing about leaving tour is... Saying goodbye to everyone.





GIG GUIDE

RETURN TO THE WARZONE

OF MICE & MEN head back to the UK for their first headline tour as a four-piece – and AARON PAULEY is ready to unleash Hell...

Q&A AARON PAULEY (VOCALS/BASS)

You've played in the UK previously since you've fronted the band, supporting Five Finger Death Punch and doing some festival dates, but are you excited to be back on your first UK headline run since taking over the vocal duties?
"Oh, it's awesome! We are all really, really excited to be back. We did the festivals last summer, but this is going to be our first proper run on the new album. We're really excited to bring these new songs, as well as the old ones, over to our UK fans."

Would you say the new material from your latest album, Defy, has been well received in the live arena so far?
"It's been crazy – we've seen that a lot of the newer material is getting a ton of fan reaction and fan love, even more so than some of the really old songs that we've been playing. It's been absolutely awesome to see that."

What are you personally still learning about fronting the band?
"You know, with anything, if you do it over and over again with a lot of practice you improve and you become more comfortable. For me, doing the vocals and whatnot, we've been able to play well over 100 shows now at this point, and the more we do, the more comfortable it gets for me."

Do you feel the UK is one of the places that has fully embraced the band and the many changes that you've gone through in the past 18 months?
"I feel like, out of all of the places we've been able to build up a market, the UK has been incredibly supportive to all the different changes and all the different albums and everything. It's something that, as a band who are attentive to our fans, we certainly don't take for granted."

> **"WE DON'T TAKE OUR FANS' SUPPORT FOR GRANTED"**
> AARON PAULEY

For fans who haven't seen you since Austin Carlile's exit, what can they expect of an Of Mice & Men live show in 2018?
"It's just a full-volume, exciting show. The setlist is something we spent a lot of time putting together, that best encompasses the new material with the old material, in a way that does absolute justice to what an Of Mice & Men live show is all about."

Now you've been touring as a quartet for the past year or so, how is the atmosphere in the OM&M camp? Are you in a positive place?
"You know, in a lot of ways it feels like it's brand new, but in a lot of ways it feels like it's what we've been doing for over the past near-decade. The atmosphere at all these shows has been absolute mayhem. We've been fortunate enough to play all these massive festivals and a lot of the UK's arenas over the years, and for us to go back and play these smaller clubs, that are purposefully very intimate, very raucous shows, feels awesome."

What's going on for the rest of the year for you guys?
"We are going to be working on new music. We are actually working on new music constantly, so we'll carry on with that. I think pretty much around the time that Defy had come out, a bunch of us had already been working on a bunch of new ideas, just brainstorming and writing stuff. It's such a therapeutic and cathartic outlet for us, so we're always creating new music. So this year will have lots of music, lots of shows and lots of Of Mice & Men!"

DATES

BRISTOL O2 Academy April 21,
GLASGOW O2 ABC 22,
MANCHESTER O2 Ritz 23,
BIRMINGHAM O2 Institute 25,
NORWICH Waterfront 26,
LONDON Camden KOKO 27,
DUBLIN Academy 29.
Support: Wage War, Sylar.

WORDS: JAMES HINGLE PHOTO: CHRIS CASEY

NOW BOOKING

☆ = JUST ANNOUNCED

2000TREES FESTIVAL Line-up: Enter Shikari, At The Drive In, Basement, Arcane Roots, Creeper, Hell Is For Heroes, Touché Amoré, Turbowolf, Gold Key, Black Foxxes, Boston Manor, Conjurer, SHVPES, Loathe, Chapter And Verse, Holding Absence, Holiday Oscar, Ho99o9, The Xcerts, Black Peaks, Hellions, Dream State, Slaftace, Press to MECO, Fangclub, Gallops, Nervus, Black Futures, GenderRoles, Bitch Falcon, Lady Bird, Sun Arcana, Haggard Cat, Sean McGowan, Frightened Rabbit, Blood Red Shoes, And So I Watch You From Afar, My Vitriol, Black Honey, Queen Kwong, VUKOVI, Blood Command, DEAD!, Brutus, Funeral Shakes, Nova Twins, Bloody Knees, Gloo, Muskets, P D Liddle, No Violet, Phoxjaw, Warshy, Sœur. Cheltenham Upcote Farm July 12 – 14.

A PERFECT CIRCLE O2 Apollo Manchester June 12, London O2 Academy Brixton 13.

ALICE IN CHAINS O2 Academy Leeds June 16, London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 17.

AMERICAN NIGHTMARE London Camden Underworld April 28, Brighton Haunt 29.

ANDREW W.K. Norwich Waterfront 18, Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms 19, O2 Ritz Manchester 20, Glasgow Garage 21.

ARCTANGENT Line-up: And So I Watch You From Afar, Pianos Become The Teeth, Foxing, Giraffes? Giraffes!, Jamie Lenman, Rolo Tomassi, Alpha Male Tea Party, Talons, Tangled Hair, Svalbard, Gulfer, Body Hound, Glassjaw, Shellac, La Dispute, Arcane Roots, Alcest, Zeal & Ardor, Black Peaks, VENNART, Delta Sleep, Telepathy, People Like Milk Products (Memory Of Elephants & Chiyoda Ku Big Band), Scalping, Wren, Jo Quail, VLMV, Vasquez, Mouse On The Keys, Plini, Tides Of Man, OHHMS, Poly-Math, Jean Jean, Pijn & Conjurer, Conjurer, Blueneck, Boss Keloid, MØL, Orchards, Halo Tora, Bad Sign, Natalie Evans, Death And The Penguin, Coldbones, Black Futures, Seven Colour Drive, Codices, Only Echoes Remain. Bristol Fernhill Farm August 16 – 18.

AS IT IS Norwich Arts Centre May 21, Sheffield Plug 22, Bristol Lantern 24, London St Pancras Old Church 25. Support: Dream State.

☆ **AUGUST BURNS RED** Birmingham O2 Institute December 8, Manchester Club Academy 9, Glasgow Garage 11, Bristol Fleece 12, London O2 Academy Islington 13.

BLACK PEAKS St Albans Horn May 1, Aldershot West End Centre 2, Bath Moles 3.

BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL Line-up: Judas Priest, Gojira, Nightwish, Emperor, DevilDriver, Watain, Orden Ogan, Fozzy, Combichrist, Memoriam, Septicflesh, Doro, Bloodbath, Cannibal Corpse, At The Gates, Kamelot, Mr. Big, Alestorm, Suicidal Tendencies, Venom Inc., Jasta, Wednesday 13, Amaranthe, Orphaned Land, Doro, Bleed From Within, Exhorder, Ingested, Mantar, Pallbearer, Vola, Sangre, Dead Label, Doomsday Outlow, Underside, King Leviathan, Fahran. Derby Catton Hall Park August 9 – 12.

☆ **BODY COUNT FEAT. ICE-T** London Camden KOKO June 12. Support: Astroid Boys, Crisix.

BOOMTOWN FESTIVAL Line-up: Limp Bizkit, Enter Shikari, Napalm Death, Soulfly, Capdown, Idles, Ho99o9, Earth Crisis, Hacktivist, Turbowolf, Sonic Boom Six, Voodoo Glow Skulls, Random Hand, Adolescents, Jaya The Cat, The Rumjacks, Inner Terrestrials, Moscow Death Brigade, Samsara Blues Experiment, Haggard Cat, [Spunge]. Winchester Matterley Estate August 9 – 12.

THE BRONX Manchester Gorilla June 8, London Camden Electric Ballroom 10. Support: Culture Abuse.

CAMDEN ROCKS FESTIVAL Line-up: Twin Atlantic, Pil, Beatsteaks, Raging Speedhorn, Sonic Boom Six, The Red Paintings, SHVPES, Ducking Punches, Carcer City, Press to MECO, Gold Key, Skarlett Riot, Death Remains and more! Camden @ various venues June 2.

CANCER BATS London Camden Underworld April 26 – 28.

CASEY Birmingham Asylum2 18, Nottingham Rock City Basement 19.

CLUTCH O2 Academy Bristol December 18, O2 Academy Glasgow 19, Manchester Academy 20, London O2 Brixton Academy 21, O2 Academy Birmingham 22.

BIFFY CLYRO: MTV UNPLUGGED TOUR

Dates: Dublin Helix September 15, Belfast Waterfront 16, Cardiff St David's Hall 18, Birmingham Symphony Hall 19, Edinburgh Usher Hall 21, Manchester Opera House 22, London Royal Albert Hall 24.

CODE ORANGE Newcastle Cluny 18, Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms 22. Support: Employed To Serve.

CONVERGE Manchester Academy II April 25, London Camden Electric Ballroom 26. Support: Crowbar, Thou, Grave Pleasures.

DANZIG Glasgow Barrowlands August 6, London O2 Academy Brixton 7.

DEAD SWANS Glasgow Audio May 10, Manchester Deaf Institute 11, Bristol Louisiana 12, London Camden Assembly 13.

DED London Camden Black Heart June 11. Support: Death Blooms

DEF LEPPARD Cardiff Motorpoint Arena December 4, London O2 Arena 6, Nottingham Motorpoint Arena 8, Metro Radio Arena 9, Glasgow SSE Hydro 11, Manchester Arena 12, Sheffield FlyDSA Arena 14, Liverpool Echo Arena 15, Birmingham Arena 17. Support: Cheap Trick.

DESERTFEST Line-up: Monster Magnet, Nebula, Eyehategod, Hawkwind, Jex Thoth, Planet Of Zeus, Black Moth, The Black Wizards, Graveyard, Napalm Death, Warning, Winterfylleth, Five The Hierophant and more! London Camden May 4 – 6 @ various venues.

DON BROCO Dublin Tivoli April 23, Belfast Mandela Hall 24, O2 Academy Oxford 26, O2 Academy Sheffield 27, O2 Academy Liverpool 28, Lincoln Engine Shed 29, Stoke Keele University May 1, Northampton Roadmender 2, Exeter Lemon Grove 3.

DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL Line-up: Ozzy Osbourne, Avenged Sevenfold, Guns N' Roses, Marilyn Manson, BABYMETAL, Asking Alexandria, Black Veil Brides, Alexisonfire, Bullet For My Valentine, Rise Against, Parkway Drive, Body Count, The Hives, In This Moment, Neck Deep, Meshuggah, Mayday Parade, The Pink Slips, WSTR, Dream State, Black Stone Cherry, Boston Manor, Cradle Of Filth, DragonForce, Hatebreed, Inglorious, Marmozets, Monster Truck, Shinedown, The Struts, The Temperance Movement, Thunder, Volbeat, Whiskey Myers, Bury Tomorrow, Corrosion Of Conformity, Dead Cross, Jonathan Davis, Kreator, L7, Powerflo, Thrice, Turbonegro, You Me At Six, Cancer Bats, Employed To Serve, Jamie Lenman, Milk Teeth, Puppy, Stick To Your Guns, Stray From The Path, The Bottom Line, The Bronx, The Faim, The Maine, All Them Witches, Baroness, blesstheFall, Death Blooms, Enmure, Gold Key, Higher Power, Knocked Loose, Koyo, Malevolence, Miss May I, Myrkur, No Hot Ashes, Plini, Rolo Tomassi, SHVPES, Sun Arcana, Tesseract, The Hyena Kill, Thy Art Is Murder, Tigress, Wayward Sons, Zeal & Ardor, Avatar, Hell Is For Heroes, Andrew W.K., CKY, Nothing More, Culture Abuse, Lawnmower Deth, Starcrawler, Bad Religion, Ded, Being As An Ocean, A, Black Foxxes, Bad Cop/Bad Cop, Igorr, Loathe, Kaiser Franz Josef, Helpless, Cellar Darling, Anchor Lane, Ecca Vandal. Derby Donington Park June 8 – 10.

EMPLOYED TO SERVE Norwich Waterfront May 16, Leicester Cookie 17, Huddersfield Parish 18, Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach 19. Support: Conjurer, God Complex.

EUROPE Manchester Academy September 14, Glasgow Barrowland 15, O2 Academy Newcastle 17, Nottingham Rock City 18, O2 Institute Birmingham 19, Cardiff St. David's Hall 21, Portsmouth Pyramids Centre 22, London Royal Albert Hall 23, Brighton Dome 24. Support: King King.

EVERY TIME I DIE London Garage May 29.

FOO FIGHTERS Manchester Etihad Stadium June 19, London Stadium 22 – 23. Support: Wolf Alice (19 and 22 only), Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes (22 only), The Kills (23 only), Slaves (23 only).

FRANK TURNER & THE SLEEPING SOULS Belfast Limelight 18, Aberdeen Garage 20, Edinburgh Liquid Room 21, O2 Academy Newcastle 22, O2 Academy Sheffield 24, O2 Academy Liverpool 25, O2 Academy Bristol 27, Exeter Uni Great Hall 28, Cambridge Corn Exchange 30, O2 Guildhall Southampton May 1, Southend Cliffs Pavilion 2, O2 Academy Leicester 4, O2 Academy Oxford 5, Hull City Hall 8, Norwich UEA 9.

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM London Eventim Apollo Hammersmith July 20 – 21, Dublin Vicar Street 23, Glasgow Barrowland 24, Manchester Eventim Apollo 25. Support: The Flatliners, Matthew Ryan.

GLASSJAW London O2 Academy Brixton August 18.

HALESTORM Dublin Academy September 19, Belfast Limelight 20, O2 Academy Sheffield 22, O2 Academy Glasgow 23, O2 Academy Birmingham 24, O2 Apollo Manchester 26, London O2 Academy Brixton 28, O2 Academy Bristol 29.

HEART OF A COWARD London Boston Music Room May 30, Manchester Rebellion June 1.

HEAVY SCOTLAND Line-up: Carcass, Gama Bomb, Nervosa, Perpetua. Edinburgh Corn Exchange August 31 – September 2.

HO99O9 Bristol Exchange May 24, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 25, Manchester Soup Kitchen 26, London Lexington 27.

HOLLYWOOD VAMPIRES Birmingham Genting Arena June 16, Manchester Arena 17, Glasgow SSE Hydro 19, London SSE Arena, Wembley 20. Support: The Darkness, The Damned.

IRON MAIDEN Newcastle Metro Radio Arena July 31, Belfast SSE Arena August 2, Aberdeen AECC BHGE Arena 4, Manchester Arena 6, Birmingham Genting Arena 7, London O2 Arena 10. Support: Killswitch Engage.

JONATHAN DAVIS Manchester Club Academy June 6, London O2 Academy Islington 7.

KARMA TO BURN London Camden Black Heart June 18, Exeter Cavern 19, Bristol Exchange 20, Coventry Phoenix 21, Manchester Rebellion 22, Newcastle Think Tank? 23, Glasgow Cathouse 24, Leeds Temple Of Boom 25, Milton Keynes Craufurd Arms 26, Oxford Cellar 27, Bournemouth Anvil 28. Support: Desert Storm.

☆ **KILLING JOKE** Nottingham Rock City November 2, O2 Academy Leeds 3, Newcastle Northumbria University Students Union 4, Glasgow Barrowland 6, Manchester Academy 7, O2 Institute Birmingham 9, O2 Academy Bristol 10, Southampton Guildhall 11, Cambridge Corn Exchange 13, Norwich UEA 14, O2 Academy Oxford 16, London Camden Roundhouse 17.

MACHINE HEAD O2 Guildhall Southampton May 13, Cardiff University 14, O2 Academy Bristol 15, O2 Academy Birmingham 17, London Camden Roundhouse 18 – 19, Nottingham Rock City 21, O2 Academy Newcastle 22, O2 Academy Glasgow 23, Manchester Academy 25.

THE MAINE London Camden Dingwalls June 6, Manchester Deaf Institute 7.

MALLORY KNOX Exeter Cavern April 18, Stoke Sugarmill 20, Glasgow King Tut's 22, Manchester Rebellion 23, Birmingham Mama Roux's 24, Nottingham Bodega 26. Support: Dead!.

MARMOZETS Norwich Waterfront May 4, O2 Academy Liverpool 5, Newcastle Boiler Shop Hit The North Festival 6, Exeter Lemon Grove 7, Northampton Roadmenders 9, Coventry Kasbah 10, O2 Academy Oxford 11. London O2 Forum Kentish Town October 19. Support: Black Peaks.

MELTDOWN FESTIVAL Line-up: Nine Inch Nails, Deftones, Placebo, My Bloody Valentine, Mogwai, 65daysofstatic, Alcest, MONO. London Southbank Centre June 15 – 24.

MODERN LIFE IS WAR Brighton Haunt June 25, Leeds Brudenell Social Club 26, Bristol Exchange 27, London Camden Underworld 28.

MOVEMENTS Leicester Cookie April 30, Newcastle Think Tank? May 1, Glasgow King Tut's 2, Leeds Key Club 4, Manchester Night People 5, Birmingham Asylum 6, Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach 7, Brighton Sticky Mike's Frog Bar 8, London Camden Assembly 9.

NICKELBACK Glasgow SSE Hydro May 3, Leeds First Direct Arena 5, Liverpool Echo Arena 7, Manchester Arena 8, Birmingham Genting Arena 10, London O2 Arena 11, Nottingham Motorpoint Arena 13. Support: Seether.

NIGHTWISH London SSE Arena Wembley December 8, Birmingham Arena 10, Manchester Arena 11. Support: Beast In Black.

NOVELISTS London Boston Music Room May 1, Glasgow Garage Attic 2, Birmingham Asylum II 3, Manchester Rebellion 4, Sheffield Mulberry Bar 5. Support: Landmvrks.

OF MICE & MEN O2 Academy Bristol April 21, O2 ABC Glasgow 22, O2 Ritz Manchester 23, O2 Institute Birmingham 25, Norwich Waterfront 26, London Camden KOKO 27, Dublin Academy 29. Support: Wage War, Sylar.

OUTBREAK FEST Line-up: Code Orange, Turnstile, Cro-Mags, Floorpunch, Angel Dust, Fury, Jesus Piece, Big Cheese, Servitude. Leeds Canal Mills June 16 – 17.

PEARL JAM London O2 Arena June 18 – 19.

PILE UP FESTIVAL Line-up: A Wilhelm Scream, Oceans Ate Alaska, Teenage Bottlerocket, Our Hollow, Our Home, Napoleon, Kingdom Of Giants, Invisions, Death Remains, Skarlett Riot, Ravenface, Veridian, Chapter & Verse, Bellevue Days, Black Orchid Empire, Tenements, Silent Screams, Siamese, Falling Red, Palm Reader, Wars, Cove, Woke Up Dead, Bury The Traitor, Kill The Ideal, Deadaudiosaints, 76 Calling. York Fibbers June 22 – 23.

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE London Finsbury Park June 30. Support: Iggy Pop, The Hives, Run The Jewels, Brody Dalle.

RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR Line-up: Halestorm, Blackberry Smoke, Sons Of Apollo, Steve Earle And The Dukes, Steel Panther, The Cult, Mott The Hoople, Me And That Man. Maidstone Mote Park June 30 – July 1.

READING & LEEDS FESTIVAL Line-up: Fall Out Boy, Panic! At The Disco, Nothing But Thieves, Wolf Alice, Papa Roach, UNDERØATH, Waterparks, Creeper, Sum 41, Beartooth, Nothing,Nowhere, Hollywood Undead, Slaves, Don Broco, Billy Talent, Deaf Havana, Milk Teeth, Mike Shinoda, Skindred, Trash Boat, Dinosaur Pile-Up, The Used, The Xcerts, The Faim, Black Peaks, Blood Youth, SHVPES, Man With A Mission, Ecca Vandal, Normandie, Sleep Token, Death From Above, Royal Republic. Reading Richfield Avenue and Leeds Bramham Park August 24 – 26.

REBELLION FESTIVAL Line-up: Public Image Limited, The Menzingers, The Vandals, Buzzcocks, Stiff Little Fingers, Discharge, The Exploited, Ruts DC, Lagwagon, UK Subs, The Adolescents, DRI and many more! Blackpool Winter Gardens August 2 – 5.

REEF / THE WILDHEARTS / TERRORVISION Manchester Academy May 4, Birmingham Digbeth Arena 5, London Eventim Apollo Hammersmith 6, O2 Academy Glasgow 19, O2 Academy Newcastle 20.

SKINDRED Norwich UEA April 19, O2 Guildhall Southampton 20, Nottingham Rock City 21, Manchester Academy 22, O2 ABC Glasgow 24, O2 Academy Bristol 25, O2 Academy Leeds 27, London O2 Academy Brixton 28, O2 Institute Birmingham 29. Support: CKY, Danko Jones.

SLAM DUNK FESTIVAL Line-up: Jimmy Eat World, Taking Back Sunday, Sleeping With Sirens, State Champs, Four Year Strong, Trash Boat, Good Charlotte, PVRIS, Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Thursday, Creeper, Every Time I Die, Knuckle Puck, Real Friends, Crown The Empire, Zebrahead, The Audition, Goldfinger, The Skints, Twin Atlantic, Northlane, Trash Boat, ROAM, Broadside, Can't Swim, Capdown, Comeback Kid, Counterparts, Save Ferris, Set Your Goals, Real Friends. Leeds City Centre May 26, Hatfield Park 27, Birmingham NEC Arena 28.

STAND ATLANTIC London Camden Assembly May 25.

STONE FREE FESTIVAL Line-up: Megadeth, Scorpions, Yes, Roger Hodgson, Joanne Shaw Taylor, Buckcherry. London O2 Arena June 16 – 17.

STONE SOUR Manchester O2 Apollo June 17, London Camden Roundhouse 18, Nottingham Rock City 19.

SVALBARD London Camden Black Heart May 24, Nottingham Soan 25. Support: MØL, Group Of Man.

TECH FEST Line-up: The Acacia Strain, The Contortionist, Cyclamen, Amogh Symphony, Vola, DVSR, Jinjer, Tides From Nebula, Voyager, Bloodshot Dawn, Rishabh Seen, The Surrealist, Damned Spring Fragrantia, Chris Schiermann, Siamese, Stomb, Leeched, You Win Again Gravity, SikTh, Protest The Hero, Conjurer, Norma Jean. Newark Showground July 5 – 9.

☆ **THRICE** London Camden Electric Ballroom June 9.

TOUCH DOWN FESTIVAL Line-up: Mallory Knox, Jolan, Homebound, Seek Solace In Ruin, Wolfpeake, Northshore, Winter Band, Dalzell, Ivory Veins. Workington Jane Street July 14.

TOUCHE AMORE Portsmouth Wedgewood Rooms July 10, London Dome 11, Nottingham Rescue Rooms 12. Support: Gender Roles.

TREMONTI O2 ABC Glasgow June 28, London O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire 29, O2 Institute Birmingham 30, Belfast Limelight July 2, Dublin Academy 3, Portsmouth Pyramids 5.

TRIVIUM O2 Academy Glasgow 19, Manchester Academy 20, London O2 Academy Brixton 21. Support: Code Orange, Power Trip, Venom Prison.

TWIN ATLANTIC Newcastle Riverside May 24, Norwich Waterfront 30, Southampton Engine Rooms June 1, Cardiff Tramshed 3. Support: Bellevue Days.

WEDNESDAY 13 Dublin Tivoli August 7, Belfast Limelight 8, Glasgow Garage 9.

WITHIN TEMPTATION O2 Academy Birmingham November 9, O2 Apollo Manchester 10, O2 Academy Glasgow 11, London O2 Academy Brixton 13.

WOES Birmingham Flapper May 2, Cardiff Clwb Ifor Bach 3, Liverpool Sound Basement 5, Norwich Waterfront Studio 6, Newcastle Jumpin Jacks 7, Edinburgh Opium June 21, Inverness Tooth & Claw 22, Dundee Beat Generator 23, Glasgow Garage Attic 24.

THE WONDER YEARS Dublin Button Factory 18, Belfast Empire Music Hall 19. Support: Sorority Noise, A.W..

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Panic! At The Disco's Brendon Urie dreams of new life as a professional darts player

The Get Up Kids blast courier firm for not delivering dining table on specific date

Maynard Keenan's appearance on new episode of Celebrity MasterChef causes alarm

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